

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



2010 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

“Commitment to Excellence”

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND 2009-2010 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Section I: Executive Summary

1. MISSION AND VALUES

Mission

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide quality, individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, and prevention of blindness services to blind and visually impaired consumers leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence.

Values

1. We value the abilities, dignity and potential of consumers who are blind and visually impaired.
2. We value compassionate, professional and committed staff.
3. We value progressive, effective leadership.
4. We value human, fiscal and information resources.
5. We value the support of the community, the Legislature, the Executive Branch and the Federal Partners.
6. We value employer partners who are receptive to training and employing the blind and visually impaired.
7. We value collaboration with other organizations, training programs and community based programs.

2. Major Achievements From Past Year

Referrals to the South Carolina Commission for the Blind's (SCCB) Vocational Rehabilitation Program increased by 39% compared to FY 2009. Additionally, 291 individuals were successfully rehabilitated. Of the 291 individuals who were successfully rehabilitated, 76% were successfully employed at or above the minimum wage.

SCCB conducted a statewide comprehensive needs assessment in order to obtain input on its current service delivery system as it related to the needs of consumers, staff and stakeholders. Public Hearings were conducted in seven (7) counties statewide in order to obtain public input. The needs – as identified by consumers, staff, stakeholders and the general public - were evaluated and categorized in accordance to the SCCB's key strategic goals.

An initiative to decentralize and standardize outreach services began in FY 10. The focus of the outreach initiative was to expand assessment and training services to consumers in unserved and underserved counties, minorities and the most significantly disabled. Expansion of outreach services included assistive technology and adjustment to blindness training opportunities. The anticipated outcome of the outreach initiative will be expediency of service delivery and an increase in the number of successful rehabilitants in FY 2011.

Job readiness training initiatives included the expansion of internship programs for college students and adults. Participation in these job readiness training initiatives resulted in work experience in a realistic job setting.

3. Key Strategic Goals

1. Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes
2. Maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community
3. Prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision
4. Provide the workforce leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency
5. Provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency
6. Implement a comprehensive information system that integrates organizational, informational and knowledge management.

Action plans pertaining to each of these goals have been developed and incorporated into the agency's Strategic Management Plan.

4. Key Strategic Challenges

The results of a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, feedback obtained from consumers, staff and stakeholders and an assessment of performance measures identified the SCCB's key strategic challenges as follows:

1. Transportation
2. Current economic condition (Unemployment Rate)
3. Transition services for students with multiple disabilities
4. Supported employment services to the most severely disabled
5. Referral sources in unserved and underserved counties
6. Workforce Capacity
7. Staff Development Training

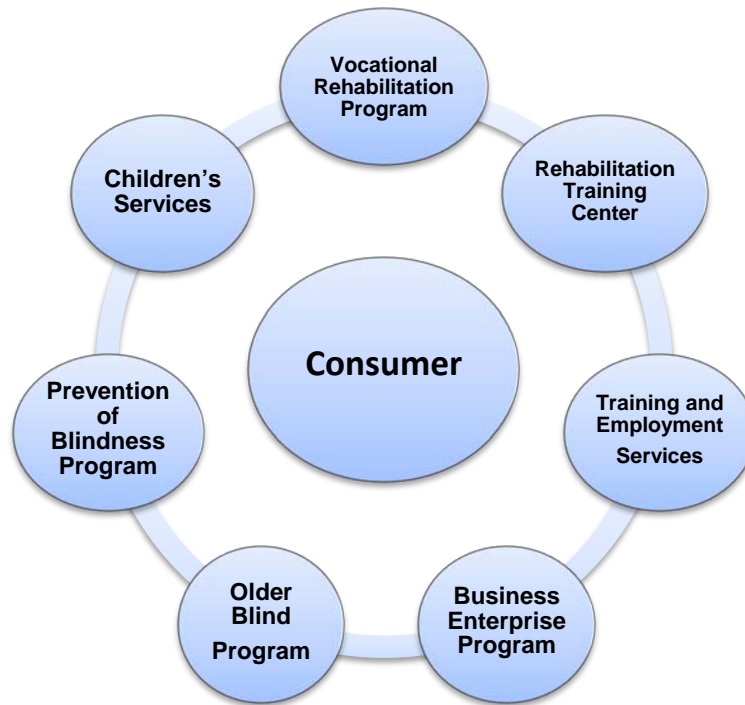
Each of these strategic challenges has been identified as significant barriers to service delivery and the achievement of the agency's mission.

5. How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance

The Commissioner of SCCB is committed to utilizing the Accountability Report as a self-assessment tool to guide the agency toward continuous quality improvement in agency operations. As categories on the Accountability Report are added, streamlined or redefined, the SCCB's Strategic Management Plan will be updated accordingly to ensure consistency with regards to the agency's response to Senior Leadership, the strategic planning process, customer focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, workforce focus and process management.

Section II: Organizational Profile

1. Main Products, Services and Service Delivery Methods



- ◆ **Vocational Rehabilitation:** Provides services which lead to competitive employment and independence
- ◆ **Rehabilitation Training Center:** Provides unique adjustment to blindness training skills which are designed to promote independence and job readiness skills
- ◆ **Training and Employment Services:** Provides training to consumers on assistive technology, job readiness skills and customer service skills that are needed to become competitively employed
- ◆ **Business Enterprise Program (BEP):** Provides job training, stand development, consulting services, job placement and stand maintenance to carry out the mandates of the Randolph-Sheppard Act
- ◆ **Older Blind:** Provides services to increase independence and quality of life in the home and community for individuals age 55 and older
- ◆ **Prevention of Blindness:** Provides services to prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision by providing appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages
- ◆ **Children Services:** Coordinates provision of services within the school system for blind and visually impaired children (birth to age 13) and their families

All of the above mentioned services are coordinated by counselors at one of 10 district offices throughout the state. Provision of these services affords the agency the opportunity to serve South Carolinians of all ages who meet the criteria for blindness and legal blindness outlined in Section 43-25-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.

2. Key Customer Groups

The agency's key customers are blind and visually South Carolinians. In order to be eligible to receive SCCB services, individuals must meet all of the following criteria:

- Medical documentation of a visual impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment
- The ability to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome
- Require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

Medical service providers are also key customers. In addition to providing medical services to SCCB consumers that are essential to determining eligibility, medical service providers also serve as an invaluable referral source.

3. Key Stakeholder Groups (Other than Customers)

- a. SCCB Foundation for the Blind
- b. Client Assistant Program
- c. SC School for the Deaf and Blind
- d. University of South Carolina
- e. Goodwill Industries
- f. Consumer Advocacy Groups
 1. National Federation of the Blind
 2. Association for the Blind
 3. SC Lion's Club
 4. American Council for the Blind
 5. Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

4. Key Suppliers and Partners

- a. Ophthalmologists, Optometrists and Physicians
- b. SC Business and Industry
- c. Workforce Investment Partners
 1. SC Department of Education (Office of Exceptional Children)
 2. SC Employment Security Commission
 3. SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department
 4. SC Department of Health and Human Services
 5. SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

5. Operation Locations

- ♦ Headquarters - 1430 Confederate Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina
Administrative Services, Columbia District Office, Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center
- ♦ District Offices: Charleston, Conway, Florence, Greer and Greenville.
- ♦ Space shared with other state agencies: Aiken, Greenwood, Rock Hill and Walterboro

6. Number of Employees by Employee Category

- ♦ 101 staff in classified
- ♦ 1 staff in an unclassified position
- ♦ 13 staff in Grant positions
- ♦ 17 staff in temporary positions

7. Regulatory Environment

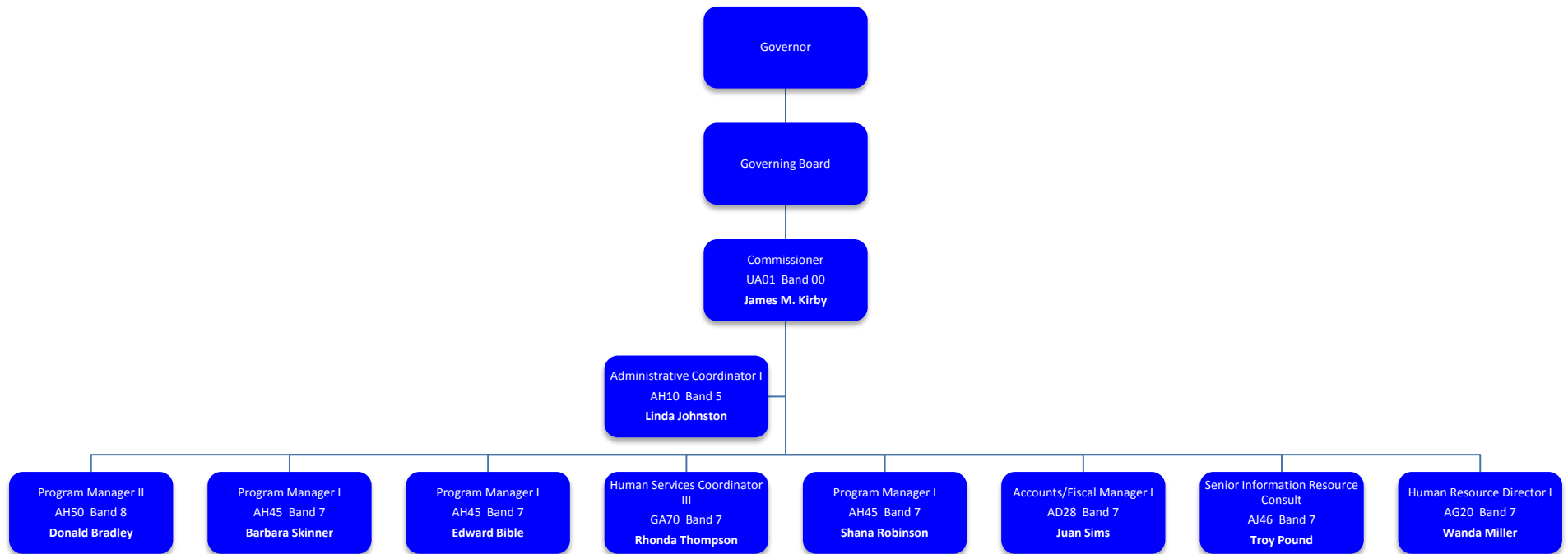
- ♦ Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- ♦ Rehabilitation Services Administration (U.S. Department of Education)
- ♦ Governor and State Legislatures
- ♦ SC Budget and Control Board
- ♦ Department of Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards
- ♦ SCCB Board of Commissioners

8. Improvement Systems(s)

- ♦ Strategic Management Plan
- ♦ Quality Assurance Audits
- ♦ Human Resources Staff Development Training

9. Organizational Structure

South Carolina Commission for the Blind Organizational Chart - Management



10. Expenditures/Appropriations Chart

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	FY 08-09 Actual Expenditures		FY 09-10 Actual Expenditures		FY 10-11 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$4,280,775	\$1,773,351	\$4,221,293	\$1,528,481	\$4,339,008	\$1,460,683
Other Operating	\$1,569,831	\$134,981	\$1,615,192	\$175,881	\$2,387,693	\$182,248
Special Items	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Permanent Improvements	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Case Services	\$2,355,438	\$541,067	\$2,561,926	\$334,253	\$2,724,457	\$151,222
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$1,291,002	\$525,406	\$1,392,919	\$595,762	\$1,245,535	\$418,215
Non-recurring	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$9,497,046	\$2,974,805	\$9,916,330	\$2,759,377	\$10,696,693	\$2,212,368

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures	FY 08-09 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0.00	\$0.00
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bonds	\$0.00	\$0.00

11. Major Program Areas

Major Program Areas									
Program	Major Program Area	FY 08-09			FY 09-10			Key Cross	
Number	Purpose	Budget Expenditures			Budget Expenditures			References for	
and Title	(Brief)							Financial Results*	
II. Rehabilitation Services	Provide training leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence	State:	\$868,348.26			\$928,347.28			
		Federal:	\$4,698,461.52			\$5,311,495.19			
		Other:	\$67,193.60			\$34,804.78			
		Total:	\$5,634,003.38			\$6,274,647.25			
		% of Total Budget:		42%					
III. Prevention	Prevent, stabilize or restore loss of vision through medical services and Prevention Awareness Programs	State:	\$432,308.00			\$150,432.40			
		Federal:	\$227,234.87			\$697,982.71			
		Other:							
		Total:	\$659,542.87			\$848,415.11			
		% of Total Budget:		10%					
V. Employee Benefits		State:				\$595,761.62			
		Federal:				\$790,368.51			
		Other:				\$6,788.81			
		Total:				\$1,392,918.94			
		% of Total Budget:							
Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.									
	Remainder of Expenditures:	State:	\$1,040,987.69		State:	\$1,084,835.70			
		Federal:	\$259,930.62		Federal:	\$315,513.00			
		Other:			Other:				
		Total:	\$1,300,918.31		Total:	\$1,400,348.70			
		% of Total Budget:		10%	% of Total Budget:				

.Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category-1: Senior Leadership, Governance and Social Responsibility

1. Set, Deploy and Ensure Two-Way Communication

The Senior Management Team is the senior leadership of SCCB. The Senior Management Team consists of the Commissioner and Program Managers from each consumer service and administrative services program. Short and long term organizational priorities, performance measures and organizational values are communicated in Senior Management meetings on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Senior Managers are directly involved in the day to day operations of their respective departments and are responsible for analyzing, formulating and assessing action plans and evaluating the agency's key performance measures. Policies, procedures and action plans are evaluated as part of the strategic planning process in order to ensure that performance measures are measureable, accurate and reliable.

Senior Managers encourage and promote staff participation in community activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, attending state sponsored employment events, raising public awareness of the existence of the agency, eligibility requirements and the purpose and availability of services.

Organizational knowledge transfer is communicated to all staff, including Senior Management, through the Strategic Management Plan. Ethical practices are reinforced through Human Resources, staff development training and performance appraisals.

Ethical behavior, including standards of conduct, is communicated to staff through the dissemination of written policy, interdepartmental meetings and Quality Assurance audits. Consumers are informed during the application process of the availability of assistance through the Client Assistance Program if there are any grievances against the agency regarding service delivery or agency staff.

Office managers have been designated in each of the 10 district offices statewide in order to assist in the continuity of accountability, office coverage and collaboration of service delivery. Each staff member is required to know the basics of each program of service in order to ensure that consumers are referred to the appropriate department

1.2 Focus on Customers and Other Stakeholders

Focus on customers is communicated through the agency's mission statement, values and the Strategic Management Plan. Consumer Informed choice in the service delivery process is a primary focus during the development and implementation of the plan of service in all consumer service programs. Quality Assurance evaluates consumer service plans to ensure that consumer participation has been adequately documented. Consumer Satisfaction Survey results are compiled and distributed to Senior Management Staff. The survey results are used to evaluate the consumer's perspective on the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery process and staff responsiveness.

1.3 Impact on the Public

The provision of individualized services which lead to competitive employment is an integral part of the SCCB's mission statement and the focal point of the Strategic Management Plan. In adhering to this aspect of the agency's mission, the immediate impact on the public is a reduction in the dependence on public support funds and services and an increase in revenue to the state once individuals become tax payers. For the older blind consumers who have been successfully rehabilitated in terms of being able to live independently, service delivery often results in the individual remaining in the home instead of being placed in a public nursing facility. SCCB's contribution to the payment of medical services for individuals reduces the dependency of service providers on federal programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. The Training and Employment Division impacts the business community by conducting statewide presentations on the benefits of hiring the blind and visually impaired, including tax incentives and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In an effort to maximize space and reduce operating expenditures, the SCCB shares space with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department and the Employment Security Commission in four counties. This results in a substantial savings of state dollars that would have otherwise been used as administrative overhead cost of operation.

The Facilities and Maintenance Manager works diligently to reduce any associated risk related to staff and consumer safety by conducting frequent inspections of the working environment of staff and the training environment of consumers. Written communication regarding safety awareness is disseminated to all staff to ensure effective communication on the specifics of safety regulations and to promote feedback on improvements for reducing the possibility of injury and workers compensation claims.

1.4 Maintaining Fiscal, Legal and Regulatory Accountability

Fiscal accountability is achieved by adherence to state and federal laws. The State Auditor's Office measures fiscal accountability through independent audits. Once the agency's annual budget is submitted, the State Budget and Control Office and State Legislators provide oversight as well. Senior Managers evaluate fiscal accountability on a monthly basis to ensure administrative and consumer service compliance throughout the agency. Budget reports are disseminated to staff in order to obtain feedback on deficiencies and/or the need for additional funding.

Currently, the SCCB does not have the infrastructure to support a fulltime attorney. However, legal accountability is maintained through an attorney with whom the agency contracts on all matters pertaining to administration and consumer services.

Regulatory accountability is accomplished through adherence to the policies and procedures of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education and state regulations. RSA is relied upon to provide notification of changes in federal regulations that have a direct impact on the agency's service delivery systems. Quality Assurance conducts weekly internal audits to ensure consistency of regulatory compliance with federal and state regulations as well as agency established policy and procedure.

The Commissioner ensures accountability by proactively soliciting input and support from the SCCB Board of Commissioners regarding program initiatives and/or proposed policy changes. SCCB Board Meetings are public forums in which consumers, staff, stakeholders and the general public can attend and actively participate by speaking directly to Board members.

The Client Assistance Program provides oversight with regards to consumer grievances pertaining to service delivery or agency service providers. In such instances wherein diplomacy has failed at the counselor level, Senior Management staff are proactive in working to achieve a balance between consumer satisfaction and compliance with federal, state and agency established policy and procedures.

1.5 Performance Measures Review

Senior Managers review program goals pertaining to referrals, eligibility determinations, development of service plans, successful closures and total served on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The quality of competitive employment placements is assessed by reviewing the number of individuals competitively placed at or above the federal minimum wage. Performance measures, consumer satisfaction survey results and compliance with federal and state regulations and agency established policy are reviewed by Quality Assurance and submitted to Senior Management staff for further review. The results outlined in the Quality Assurance reports are used to assess the need for performance improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery and the strategic planning process.

1.6 Use of Organizational Review Findings and Employee Feedback

The results of organizational performance review findings are used by Senior Managers to establish short and long term organizational direction and priorities and improve performance. The goals, objectives and action plans on the Strategic Management Plan are reviewed quarterly to evaluate trends in terms of meeting program goals. Success is measured by the ability to meet or exceed key performance measures.

In addition to the agency mission statement, a dedication to promote continuous quality improvement in all areas of service delivery and administrative support is the primary focus of the Senior Management Team. Performance measures are not only evaluated in terms of whether or not goals and objectives were met, but also in accordance to how, when and where improvements can be made. An assessment of the number of consumers placed in competitive employment and total served provides Senior Managers with the opportunity to improve upon the distribution of workforce capacities and reallocation of resources to reach the unserved and underserved. Consumers Satisfaction Surveys are conducted to obtain input from consumers on the quality of service delivery and the accessibility and responsiveness of agency service providers. Performance review findings – including those that are disseminated by Quality Assurance - are used to assess deficiencies in service delivery.

The performance review findings are communicated in performance measures on the Strategic Management Plan and the Accountability Report. Senior Management takes a personal interest in ensuring that the Accountability Report is used as a self-assessment tool to guide the agency toward continuous quality improvement in agency operations. The performance results of the Strategic Management Plan and the Accountability Report are the basis on which the need for program and policy changes and staffing needs are communicated to the SCCB Board of Commissioners, the General Assembly and the Governor.

Employee feedback is communicated through individual performance appraisals and department staff meetings. Based on this feedback, training initiatives and interagency collaborations are established. Input on the barriers to service delivery and the opportunity for agency expansion are sought from staff. Staff are encouraged to be direct and to share their field experiences with Senior Managers as well as other agency staff in an open forum. This feedback is used by Senior Managers to explore and implement best practices in program management and service delivery. This would include, but not be limited to, an assessment of the need to collaborate with other state agencies, education officials, employment partners (those established by the federal Workforce Investment Act) and consumer advocacy groups.

1.7 Succession Planning and Development of Future Organizational Leaders

SCCB has identified succession planning as an essential component to the continuity of service delivery. Cross training for administrative support staff has already been implemented. Potential leaders and managers are identified through individual performance appraisals and project initiatives through staff development training.

Senior Managers take every available opportunity to mentor staff and ensure that best practices are fully integrated at all levels of service delivery, including routine administrative functions. Professional and leadership development of staff include training on communication, technical skills training, case management and time and project management. The effectiveness of the above mentioned succession planning strategies is determined by performance measures and the achievement of program goals.

1.8 Creating an Environment for Performance Improvement

Continuous quality improvement is the cornerstone of the agency's approach to performance improvement and effective strategic planning. Goals, objectives and the actions plans outlined in the Strategic Management Plan are consistently evaluated on a quarterly basis to accomplish this. Senior Managers solicit feedback from staff on barriers to accomplishing objectives and performance measures. With this direct interaction with staff, Senior Managers can make informed decisions regarding program effectiveness and the identification of barriers and best practices to service delivery.

A review of the strategies and action plans identified in the Strategic Management Plan are also conducted to ensure that the categories outlined on the Accountability Report are adequately addressed. The purpose of this is to ensure that the agency is utilizing the Accountability Report as a self-assessment tool to improve performance.

1.9 Creating an Environment for Organizational and Workforce Learning

Organizational and workforce learning is accomplished through succession planning and staff development training initiatives such as time management, reinforcement on best practices of service delivery, character building and teamwork. As an integral part of the succession planning process, policy and procedure manuals are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure consistency of program operations and best practices of job performance. Staff are encouraged to provide input on any additional training needs not addressed in the agency's core training curriculum.

Organizational and workforce learning is also accomplished through the use of performance measures data trends. Senior Managers use data trends to assess whether or not the agency's mission and the goals outlined in the Strategic Management Plan have been achieved. Barriers to service delivery are typically exposed through data trends and performance appraisals. In such instances, Senior Managers meticulously document the performance appraisal and provide assertive feedback to staff on the expectation of performance improvement. An open line of communication is encouraged when there are questions, concerns or uncertainty regarding the success criteria of job duties or the means by which job duties are to be carried out.

1.10 Motivation of Agency Workforce

The primary means by which the Senior Managers communicate to staff their role in the achievement of the agency's mission is through performance appraisals. Each job function and the success criteria to accomplish the job function are directly related to the agency's mission and the goals, objectives and action plans identified in the Strategic Management Plan. Consumer feedback on service delivery and staff performance are also utilized to motivate staff. Senior Managers use the feedback obtained from the results of the Consumer Satisfaction Surveys to emphasize the impact of thorough and efficient service delivery in the lives of the consumers.

In an effort to boost staff morale and improve attitudes about job performance and the work environment, a Rewards and Recognition Program has been established. Staff are encouraged to recognize and nominate their peers on the basis of extra effort, teamwork, positive attitude, service and loyalty to the agency, process improvement and innovation, initiative, customer service, ethical behavior, professional development and community service. The types of awards range from informal Peer Award Cards to monetary awards. The type of reward that is dispersed is contingent upon the number of responses received for each individual nominee.

Staff are also provided the opportunity to make nominations for an Employee of the Year Award. The selected employee is one who epitomizes the agency's mission and has consistently demonstrated exemplary efforts in promoting the well being of consumers and staff. The recipient of this award is recognized at the agency's annual staff meeting.

1.11 Strengthening the Community

Areas of emphasis for community involvement are based on the mission of the agency, the need to collaborate with other human service initiatives, advocacy groups, vision related service groups and the expressed needs of the blind and visually impaired community. Community involvement is achieved through service on interagency committees, participation in community efforts such as the United Way, Red Cross Blood Drive, Good Health Appeal, Prevention Partners, and Palmetto Health (i.e. flu shots). Collaboration with other state agencies reduces the risk of duplication of services, provides exchange of useful information and creates opportunities for joint endeavors such as grant funding. Staff of the consumer service programs set up booths at local community events to raise awareness about the availability of services. The SCCB also collaborates with consumer advocacy groups for the blind and visually impaired to reach underserved populations such as the Deaf-Blind, transitioned aged-youth, Hispanics and individuals living in rural areas.

Category 2: Strategic Planning

2.1 Strategic Planning Process

The mission statement is the basis of the development of the Strategic Management Plan. The Strategic Management Plan describes, in detail, each department's contribution to the goals and objectives that are necessary to achieve the agency's mission. A statewide comprehensive needs assessment is conducted every three years. This includes an assessment of consumer and staff needs as well as an evaluation of consumer and key stakeholder feedback with regards to improving service delivery. Additionally, internal and national data trends, accountability to the federal government, the SCCB Board of Commissioners, legislatures and tax payers are also incorporated in the strategic planning process. The result is a structure by which Senior Managers coordinate and evaluate performance measures. The goals, objectives and action plans identified in the strategic planning process have all been integrated into the performance appraisals for all staff to ensure that objectives and performance measures are met or exceeded in each program or department.

The development and implementation of the strategic planning process included an identification of the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers to the achievement of the agency's mission to provide services which lead to competitive employment and social and economic independence. Initiatives which lead or could potentially lead to securing employment for consumers were identified as strengths and opportunities. These included building and maintaining relationships with business and industry; Developing cooperative agreements with employment partners, nonprofit organizations, and consumer advocacy groups to expand training opportunities and increase referrals; Accessibility to district offices; Establishment of specialized caseloads such as Transition Services for High School Students, Deaf/Blind, Independent Living and the most severely disabled. The purpose of the establishment of specialized caseloads is to reach the unserved, underserved, minorities and the most significantly disabled throughout the state.

Conversely, weaknesses and barriers were identified on the basis of issues and concerns that could impede employment outcomes and independence living. These included workforce capacities to consistently provide outreach services to the unserved and underserved populations in the state; Job retention for consumers with multiple disabilities; Lack of reliable transportation; Provision of transition services for students with multiple disabilities; Rate of recidivism and alternate funding sources for state funded programs. Quality Assurance provides the Commissioner and Senior Managers with data reports pertaining to each of the latter mentioned concerns so that an informed decision can be made relative to the development and implementation of strategies and the most appropriate action plans.

The strategic planning process addresses the financial needs of the agency in terms of the best practices for the allocation of funding that is necessary to achieve the performance measures outlined in the Strategic Management Plan. In an effort to maintain service delivery, performance standards and implement new program initiatives, Senior Managers evaluate the

availability and cost effectiveness of funding. Potential risks would be funding that was not consistent with the increasing cost of service delivery. These would include, but not be limited to, the increased cost on the provision of assistive technology software and equipment needed to train consumers and the cost of tuition assistance for those consumers whose vocational objective require a college degree.

As federal and state funding requirements change, strategic planning is adjusted according. Strategies and action plans are evaluated by the Senior Managers to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations as well as consumer informed choice. The agency's capacity to provide services to consumers is closely linked to the analysis of the workforce. Staffing needs are evaluated by the Senior Managers to ensure that the consumer to counselor ratio is manageable. Consideration is also given to the need to strategically restructure job functions among staff. Succession planning is kept current as workforce capacities expand to meet the needs of the consumers. Performance appraisals are also current and include an evaluation on the need for additional training.

Office Coordinators have been identified in each of the 10 district offices statewide and are relied upon to assist in the assessment of workforce capabilities and needs and to ensure the continuity and consistency of service delivery. A team approach is utilized in that each staff member is required to be knowledgeable about basic information in all programs so that consumers and the general public can be referred to the appropriate department.

Changes in technology remain a challenge for SCCB consumers. Because most software and equipment is not accessible for the blind, software compatibility remains a consistent barrier. In order to keep up with technological advances, assistive technology training initiatives for the staff of the Training and Employment Division are continual. Strategic planning would include expanding training to ensure that consumers are prepared for technological changes as they occur. Communication must be maintained with the companies who employ the blind and visually impaired so that software compatibility can be accomplished. Other potential financial risks include the prospect of state budget cuts. Strategic planning by Senior Managers would include actions plans designed to absorb any potential budget cuts so that the quality of service delivery will not be compromised.

Execution of the Strategic Plan includes a quarterly internal review of performance measures to assess target goals and to ensure that the strategies and action plans that were previously identified are being addressed and implemented.

2.2 Addressing Strategic Challenges

Performance review data and internal and external feedback are vital components of the agency's strategic planning initiatives to address programmatic and service delivery strategic challenges. Strategic challenges are specifically addressed in the strategies and action plans outlined in the Strategic Management Plan. To ensure that the strategic challenges identified in the strategic planning process do not impede the range and quality of service delivery or have a negative impact on performance measures, strategic objectives include best practices to responsiveness to consumer informed choice. Additionally, a comprehensive approach to encourage continuous quality improvement is coordinated through Quality Assurance. As each strategic challenge is evaluated in accordance to the relevance of achieving performance measures and the agency's mission, action plans are developed or modified accordingly.

2.3 Developing and Tracking Action Plans

Senior Managers develop and track action plans. Action plans are monitored for compliance and achievement of goals through a comprehensive assessment of performance measures and feedback from consumers, staff and stakeholders. Performance measures are also used to identify staff development training needs and establish new program initiatives. Senior Managers review performance measures on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis to evaluate the effectiveness of action plans. As strategic challenges are identified, action plans are modified to ensure consistency of performance measure results and effectiveness of service delivery. The results of consumer satisfaction surveys are also incorporated into the development of actions plans.

Quality Assurance works closely with Senior Managers and service delivery staff to provide data needed to coordinate and establish strategic planning initiatives and identify areas of potential weakness. The Finance Department conducts quarterly meetings with each Senior Manager to review and discuss case service expenditures and make recommendations for reallocation of resources to meet the needs of consumers and service delivery staff.

Senior Managers establish and communicate individual goals for successful rehabilitation through staff performance appraisals. Factors which determine the basis of individual and program goals include referral sources, caseload size, demographic and economic conditions, data trends indicating previous achievements and the availability of financial resources.

2.4 Communication and Deployment of Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives are communicated through Senior Management meetings – both individually and collectively – and communicated to staff through performance appraisals and monthly reports outlining data trends and achievement of quarterly performance measures. Senior Managers conduct monthly and quarterly follow-up to ensure that goals and objectives of service delivery are clearly understood and that staff are proactively working towards compliance.

Staff are encouraged to provide feedback and to communicate any potential barriers to the achievement of goals. Senior Managers utilize feedback to assess best practices and training needs, including the need to initiate cross training on unique and/or specialized job functions.

2.5 Measuring Progress on Action Plans

Measuring the progress of action plans is a vital part of the agency's continuous quality improvement initiative. Quality Assurance disseminates performance measures and data trends on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis to Senior Managers and individual staff. Senior Managers evaluate this data to determine the effectiveness of the action plans as it relates to the achievement of key performance measures. Quarterly and annual data trends are used to devise future projections of workforce and financial resource needs. Quality Assurance disseminates survey results from consumers. These results are used by Senior Managers to improve service delivery and responsiveness to consumer needs.

Regulatory compliance is accomplished through adherence to federal and state regulations and agency established policy and procedure. Additionally, Quality Assurance conducts weekly internal audits of consumer case files to ensure consistency of regulatory compliance. Reports are disseminated to the responsible staff for corrective action in instances of noncompliance. Follow-up is a collaborative effort by Quality Assurance and the Senior Manager of the responsible staff to facilitate compliance which could include, but not be limited to, the provision of training to achieve and maintain compliance.

Federal standards and indicators measure the agency's performance on all closed cases. Performance measures pertaining to successful closure rates, competitive employment closures, comparative wage earnings, and the number of self supporting individuals at application and closure and access to services by minorities are all evaluated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and compared to all federally funded Blind agencies nationally.

2.6 Evaluating and Improving the Strategic Planning Process

Senior Managers evaluate the strategic planning process on the basis of whether or not goals and performance measures have contributed to the achievement of the agency's mission. Feedback from the SCCB Board of Commissioners, Quality Assurance, staff, consumers, consumer advocacy groups and other key stakeholders is used to assess the agency's past and current status, possible solutions to potential barriers to employment outcomes and action plans which have led or will lead to improvement(s) in service delivery.

2.7 Availability of the Strategic Management Plan

The agency's Strategic Management Plan is currently not available to the public. It is available through the agency's Intranet System for staff.

2.8 Key Strategic Objectives

Strategic Planning			
Program	Supported Agency	Related FY 08-09 and beyond	Key Cross
Number	Strategic Planning	Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)	References for
and Title	Goal/Objective	and Timeline for Accomplishing the Plan(s)	Performance Measures*
II. Rehabilitation Services	Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the number of referrals received • Maintain the number of consumers served • Maintain consistency in the delivery of VR services • Provide adjustment to blindness, job readiness and job development training • Utilize consumer satisfaction survey responses 	7.1-1, 7.1-5, 7.1-6, 7.1-8, 7.1-9, 7.1-10, 7.1-11, 7.2-1, 7.5-1, 7.6-1
II. Community Services (Older Blind and Children Services)	Enhance and maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the number of referrals received • Provide adjustment to blindness skills training to older blind consumers (55 years of age and older) • Maintain service delivery to blind and visually impaired children • Identify and serve blind and visually impaired children (birth to age 14) and their families 	7.1-2, 7.1-4, 7.2-1, 7.5-2, 7.5-4
III. Prevention	To prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the number of referrals received • Provide appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages 	7.1-3, 7.5-3
IV. Workforce Focus	To provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit, hire, place and retain staff • Develop and/or maintain employees' skills necessary to accomplish the agency mission 	7.4-1, 7.4-2, 7.4-3, 7.4-4
V. Administration	To provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure compliance with state and federal regulations governing programs • Maintain sound fiscal procedures and accountability levels that are acceptable by all funding sources 	7.3-1, 7.3-2, 7.3-3, 7.3-4, 7.3-5
I. Administration	To implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a consumer tracking system that supports the agency's data reporting requirements • Maintain a standardized information system that reflects and supports the agency infrastructure 	

*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document

Category 3: Customer Focus

3.1 Key Customers and Requirements

The agency's key customers are those individuals who meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. Has a visual impairment which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment
2. Can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome
3. Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment

Medical service providers are also key customers. In addition to providing medical services to SCCB consumers that are crucial in determining eligibility and additional impediments to employment, medical service providers also serve as invaluable referral sources.

3.2 Keeping current with Changing Customer/Business Needs and Expectations

All direct service delivery staff are provided training that is focused on service delivery in the specific areas relevant to agency programs. Staff also maintain contact with providers of services such as assistive technology, Braille products and independent living aids. Senior Managers ensure that current literature in the field of rehabilitation for the blind and visually impaired are available to all staff. The information gathered through these activities is applied to program planning, expansion and improvement. Attendance at local, state and national conferences and workshops are encouraged and supported as resources allow. Consumer satisfaction on service delivery and service providers is collected, evaluated and incorporated into current and future strategic planning. Consumer Advocacy Groups such as the National Federation for the Blind and the Association for the Blind are key stakeholders which provide invaluable information on the agency's initiatives to meeting the needs of the community.

3.3 Key Customer Access Mechanisms

SCCB has 10 district offices located throughout the state which provide consumers with direct access to services and service delivery staff. Quality Assurance and consumer service Senior Management staff monitor cases to ensure consistency of consumer contact, documentation of informed choice and consumer participation in the rehabilitation process. The agency's web site is a resource for individuals seeking services or information. Inquiries are forwarded to the appropriate local offices to initiate services. As staff market SCCB programs, they also receive feedback from the community. During the application processes, each consumer is advised of the existence and purpose of the Client Assistance Program (CAP). Service delivery staff ensure that consumers have a full understanding of their right to contact CAP if they are dissatisfied with service delivery or agency staff.

The Commissioner and Senior Managers attend advocacy group meetings, consumer group meetings and meet with individual consumers to obtain feedback on concerns and needs. Consumers can also attend agency Board meetings to obtain information on the state of the agency and initiate discussions in an open forum with the SCCB Board of Commissioners.

The Educational Radio Program is a state funded program which enables consumers to obtain statewide information. Consumers are provided with daily access to newspapers (i.e. the State, Greenville News and the Post & Courier), magazines, books, and other contemporary printed material through radio receivers loaned to SCCB consumers. The radio reading service is noncommercial and operates on a subchannel of the South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV). Programs air 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The newspapers, magazines and books are all read by volunteers.

3.4 Customer/Stakeholder Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Quality Assurance measures customer satisfaction with Consumer Satisfaction Surveys. All consumers for whom an Individualized Plan for Employment was developed and implemented are surveyed on questions pertaining to service delivery (including timeliness and substantiality) and staff responsiveness. They are also asked to provide recommendations for improvement. The results are compiled and disseminated to Senior Managers on a quarterly and annual basis. As a part of continuous quality improvement, Senior Managers use survey results to make changes to the strategies and action plans on the Strategic Management Plan and assess management and staff training needs.

Quality Assurance also disseminates data trends to Senior Managers pertaining to unsuccessful closures and the reasons for such. During individual meetings with service delivery staff, Senior Managers are proactive in obtaining feedback on the specific case details of unsuccessful closures. This feedback is used to modify strategies and action plans specifically designed to reduce the number of unsuccessful closures.

The extent of consumer dissatisfaction is assessed through service delivery staff, Consumer Satisfaction Surveys and the Client Assistance Program (CAP). In such instances wherein the consumer is dissatisfied with the agency, Senior Management staff are diligent in working with CAP to achieve a balance between consumer satisfaction and compliance with federal, state and agency established policy and procedures.

3.5 Providing Continuous Improvement

Continuous quality improvement is an essential component of the strategic planning and service delivery process. To accomplish this, focus on consumer informed choice and consumer needs is given the utmost attention. Feedback from consumers and other key stakeholders is evaluated and integrated into the action plans of the strategic management planning process to evaluate program effectiveness and make changes.

Performance measures and data trends identified in the Accountability Report are also evaluated to assess the need for program initiatives and training. Cooperative agreements have been developed and maintained to ensure collaboration relative to comprehensive service delivery.

3.6 Building Positive Relationships with Customers and Stakeholders

Counselors in all consumer service programs expend a significant amount of time in ensuring that the consumer understands that rehabilitation is a process and that participation is essential in order to achieve independence and an improved quality of life. Once the eligibility process has been completed, Counselors are proactive in empowering the consumer to exercise informed choice and become an active participant not only in the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment or Independent Living, but in every phase of the service delivery process. The counseling and guidance service that is utilized to accomplish this fosters a positive rapport and builds trust between the consumer and the Counselor.

The Training and Employment Division works diligently to build and maintain a positive relationship with business and industry employers. Services provided to accomplish this include conducting consultation on the Americans with Disability Act, providing diversity training to promote an integrated work setting, providing information on tax incentives for hiring the blind and visually impaired and providing consultation and demonstrations of assistive technology software and equipment.

SCCB utilizes cooperative agreements to build positive working relationships with other state agencies, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions. Cooperative agreements are used to expand the availability of service delivery to consumers and increase referrals.

Category 4: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

4.1 Determination of Operations, Processes and Systems to Measures

Achievement of the agency's mission statement and the Strategic Management Plan are the key determinants of operations, processes and systems used to track financial and organizational performance. Data utilized to evaluate performance is disseminated from the Quality Assurance Department and through a national data comparison of other blind agencies. Key action plans and performance measures have been developed which integrates federal and state regulations and feedback from consumers, key stakeholders and staff. Senior Managers review financial and organizational performance measures to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of action plans and make informed decisions regarding program improvement. This includes the development and subsequent tracking of new procedures as the needs of consumers change.

4.2 Integration of Data/Information for Analysis

Consumer data is collected via the agency's Client Information System. The data to be collected and integrated into the service delivery systems is determined by the agency's mission and performance measures relating to federal regulations, federal and state reporting requirements (including the federal Standards and Indicators) and internal reports to the SCCB Board of Commissioners. Quality Assurance compiles and disseminates data trends and caseload comparisons to Senior Managers so that a thorough, informed decision regarding the effectiveness of service delivery can be made. Data trends in all key performance measures reflect at least a three (3) year data comparison.

4.3 Key Measures

The agency's key measures for all consumer service programs include referrals, referrals processed, consumers successfully rehabilitated and consumers in an active service status. Other performance measures which may be program specific include:

- Number of eligibility determinations
- Number of service plans developed
- Number of individuals competitively employment at or above the minimum wage
- Number of Individuals served by program and county
- Consumer satisfaction
- Number of cases in compliance with federal, state and agency guidelines
- Comparison of Blind Licensed Vendor earnings to the state's average earnings
- Number of individuals who received training

Key performance measures are directly related to the agency's mission to achieve competitive employment and social and economic independence. Program goals pertaining to each of the above mentioned categories are reviewed on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The quality of competitive employment placements is assessed by reviewing the number of individuals competitively placed at or above the federal minimum wage. Performance measures, consumer satisfaction survey results and compliance with federal and state regulations and agency established policies and procedures are reviewed by Quality Assurance and communicated to Senior Managers on a quarterly and annual basis. The results outlined in Quality Assurance Reports are used to assess the need for performance improvement and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic planning process.

The results of key measures are used by Senior Managers to establish short and long term organizational direction and priorities and improve performance. The goals, objectives and action plans on the Strategic Management Plan are reviewed quarterly to evaluate trends in terms of meeting program goals and assessing areas in need of improvement.

An assessment of the number of consumers placed in competitive employment and the total number of consumers served provides Senior Managers with the opportunity to improve upon workforce capacity and reallocation of resources to reach the unserved and underserved.

Performance review findings – including those that are disseminated by Quality Assurance - are used to assess deficiencies in service delivery as well as the need for staff development training.

In addition to the assessment of performance review findings, a comprehensive statewide needs assessment is conducted at least once every three years in an effort to keep key performance measures current for consumer service programs. Needs assessment surveys are disseminated to consumers, staff, stakeholders and the SCCB Board of Commissioners. Additionally, public hearings are conducted in an effort to obtain input from the general public. The results of the needs assessment are compiled from each source, evaluated and incorporated into the strategies, actions plans and performance measures in the Strategic Management Plan.

4.4 Use of Key Comparative Data

The SCCB's federal regulatory agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), compiles data submitted from a Case Service Report from all rehabilitation agencies (Blind as well as general) in the country. The Case Service Report outlines detailed data on all case closures - successful and unsuccessful - pertaining to successful closure rates, competitive employment closures, comparative wage earnings, the number of self supporting individuals at application and closure and access to services by minorities. The SCCB uses this data to assess the effectiveness of its vocational rehabilitation program and to compare its rank to other agencies servicing the Blind throughout the country.

The goals, objectives and action plans identified in the strategic planning process have all been incorporated into the service delivery programs and administrative services. This includes a direct correlation to job functions and success criteria on performance appraisals. Feedback from consumers and key stakeholders is used to assess the agency's current performance, possible solutions to potential barriers and action plans which have led or will lead to improvement(s) in service delivery and new program initiatives.

4.5 Ensuring Data Integrity for Decision Making

The agency's Client Information System (CIS) provides detailed data on each case as it progresses through the rehabilitation process from application to closure. Data integrity is achieved through multi-level checks and balances which have been identified for data validation. To ensure timeliness of data entry, service delivery staff adhere to a weekly and monthly deadline by which data must be entered. Reports produced from the CIS are reviewed by service delivery staff at least once a month to ensure that each case is in the appropriate status within the established timeframe. Quality Assurance performance audits verify the quality and integrity of case files and includes a comparison of case file information to CIS data. System backups and a stable, controlled operating environment have provided 100% system availability.

Quality Assurance provides Senior Managers with performance measure results so that an informed decision pertaining to modifications to the strategic planning process can be made as

needed. The database reporting system requirements are updated and validated for integrity and accuracy as needed to ensure completion of federal and state reporting requirements.

All data is stored on a network server and are backed up on a daily basis. To protect the confidentiality of consumer data, state of the art firewalls have been put into place to safeguard against unauthorized access.

4.6 Translating Performance Review Findings Into Continuous Improvement Priorities

Senior Managers utilize the strategic planning process to identify potential barriers to the achievement of the agency's mission. The priorities for improvement are driven by the results of key performance measures that are directly linked to staff performance appraisals. The Quality Assurance Department reviews cases to determine compliance with federal and state regulations and agency established policies and procedures. Senior Managers use the information generated from Quality Assurance audits to evaluate improvements needed for service delivery. Continuous improvement priorities are communicated through the dissemination of written policies and procedures, feedback on performance appraisals and training initiatives.

4.7 Maintaining Organizational and Employee Knowledge

Organizational and employee knowledge is maintained through succession planning. Senior Managers routinely evaluate workforce capacities as it relates to the needs of consumers. Quarterly reviews of staff availability are conducted to ensure that any succession planning previously outlined is updated as needed with regards to current staffing needs and the continuity of service delivery.

Organizational and employee knowledge is also maintained through the agency's Employee Mentoring Program. A new employee is paired with a veteran employee who has similar job duties. The veteran employee is responsible for orienting the new employee to the agency, training on job duties, and serving as a mentor. The transfer of knowledge on best practices of standardized administrative task is communicated through procedure manuals. Senior Managers routinely review procedure manuals to ensure consistency of agency operations.

Category 5: Workforce Focus

5.1 Organization and Measurement of Work

Performance appraisals are the primary means by which Senior Managers monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce. Performance measures pertaining to all aspects of the strategic planning process (i.e. objectives, strategies and action plans) are integrated into performance appraisals.

Staff are encouraged to be an active participant in staff meetings and provide input on the development of procedures that are to be identified as best practices to improve current service delivery practices and future program initiatives.

Senior Managers have taken a more active role in ensuring that all staff have a clear understanding of how his/her job affects the overall mission of the agency. As a part of succession planning, cross training is a valuable tool that is used to assist staff in developing their full potential. Staff benefit from cross training in that they are afforded the opportunity to develop additional experience and skills.

The agency recognizes employees for meeting or exceeding goals during Public Service Recognition Week. Service awards are also presented to staff during the agency's annual staff meeting. Empowerment of staff is encouraged through participation in the Rewards and Recognition Program. Staff are encouraged to recognize and nominate their peers on the basis of extra effort, teamwork, positive attitude, service and loyalty to the Agency, process improvement and innovation, initiative, customer service, ethical behavior, professional development and community service. The types of awards range from an informal Peer Award Card to monetary awards. The type of reward that is dispersed is based on the number of responses received for each individual nominee.

5.2 Effective Communication and Shared Knowledge/Skill/Best Practices

Shared knowledge, skill and best practices are accomplished through succession planning and cross training. Effective communication with regards to shared knowledge as it relates to service delivery is most evident in the district offices located throughout the state. In order to provide efficient office coverage, staff are required to know the basic program knowledge of all programs in order to provide good customer service. Staff meetings fostering interdepartmental collaboration are conducted on at least a quarterly basis so that staff are afforded the opportunity to be proactive in identifying best practices and addressing internal and external potential barriers to communication and service delivery.

5.3 Recruit, Hire, Place and Retain New Employees

Recruitment of staff is primarily based on whether or not the minimum training and experience and education have been obtained for vacant positions. Additionally, the SCCB's Office of Human Resources has implemented a pre-interview process for vacant administrative and/or support positions. Each applicant is tested on the basic skills that are required to successfully perform the job for which they are applying. Candidates who successfully complete the pre-interview process are then forwarded to the hiring Program Manager for a second interview.

Assessment of staffing needs is primarily based on the goals, objectives and action plans of the strategic planning process. A persistent barrier to recruitment has been identified as recruiting qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors or Rehabilitation Instructors who have already met the educational requirements of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development component as stipulated in the Code of Federal Regulations.

5.4 Workforce Capability and Capacity Needs

Workforce capabilities and capacity are assessed through the Strategic Planning process, the results of consumer satisfaction surveys and the criteria of the federally mandated Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirements. Senior Managers evaluate staffing needs on the basis of its impact on service delivery and the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Management Plan.

An evaluation of workforce capabilities also provides Senior Managers with an opportunity to develop and implement training initiatives designed to expand organizational knowledge, enhance job skills and leadership development.

5.5 Work Performance Management System

In order to maintain continuous quality improvement, it is essential that every employee understand the responsibilities of his/her job and be given continuous and constructive evaluation of their performance. This is accomplished through the use of the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) as it is an effective management tool for communicating job duties, evaluating performance and encouraging improvement. The EPMS promotes two way communication between Senior Managers and staff. Senior Managers acknowledge successful achievements of job duties and make comments and recommendations for performance improvement. Staff are afforded the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the best practices which lead to the successful achievement of job functions as well as barriers which lead to the inability to achieve job functions. Best practices pertaining to the successful achievement of job functions are communicated to staff with similar job duties and incorporated into the strategic planning process as a means of achieving action plans.

5.6 Development and Learning System for Leaders

Development of personal leadership attributes is accomplished through staff development training. Through the Inservice Training Grant, Senior Managers and midlevel supervisors are afforded the opportunity to attend leadership development seminars and conferences. The agency's Training Coordinator collects feedback from participants in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and to assess the need for additional training. All training is coordinated on the basis of its relation to organizational usefulness and the agency's mission statement.

5.7 Addressing Key Developmental Training Needs for the Workforce

Staff Development training is designed around the agency's mission and supports the needs of the staff with regards to organizational knowledge, job skills and career advancement. The most critical training needs of SCCB staff were determined from the results of a Staff Development Training Needs Assessment, comments from Training Evaluations, and the VR Staff Survey results from the staff component of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Based on these results, four training objectives were identified as Leadership training, Technical Skills training, Communication of Policies and Procedures and Specialty Training (i.e. medical terminology, diversity and sensitivity awareness, team building). A federal Inservice Training Grant is the primary funding source for staff development training.

In an effort to develop training sessions designed to enhance the ability of all staff to support the agency's mission, an assessment of the effectiveness of training and the need for additional training continues to remain an ongoing process. This process is accomplished through the identification of barriers to service delivery, performance appraisals, training requests, cross training and succession planning of job duties and the results of follow-up surveys on the performance impact of training.

Safety training and awareness is managed by the agency's Facilities Maintenance Manager and the Training Coordinator. Safety training and awareness is conducted by way of routine fire drills, dissemination of information pertaining to evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency and defensive driver training courses. The Facilities Maintenance Manager is also responsible for the administration of the safety and health issues concerning the agency. Efforts to ensure consumer and staff safety include maintaining a lock system in which employees and consumers are assigned an entry card for access to the buildings located at the agency's main complex. The district offices are located in facilities in which visitors come to a main entrance before visiting any staff. The Facilities Maintenance Manager also works closely with other state agencies such as the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and Construction and Planning of the Budget and Control Board in order to maintain current information with regards to compliance with safety regulations. As a direct result of this collaboration, the agency's Emergency Action Plan is reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

5.8 Use of New Knowledge and Skills

In an effort to encourage continuous quality improvement among staff, training sessions are developed to expand organizational knowledge and enhance job skills. As part of the evaluation process of the effectiveness of training, new knowledge and skills which have been identified as best practices are incorporated in the performance appraisals of staff who have comparable job duties and/or program goals. The success criteria for functions which require the use of new knowledge and skills are evaluated in accordance to its impact on service delivery and the achievement of the agency's strategic goals and objectives. Use of new knowledge and skills is also communicated through cross training and succession planning of job duties.

5.9 Contribution of Employee Training to Achieve Action Plans

The purpose of staff development training is to ensure that staff are provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully perform their job duties. Staff training needs are directly linked to the achievement of the agency's mission. As staff become more knowledgeable and skillful in performing their jobs, successful achievement of action plans and performance measures is assured. The result is a substantial impact on efficient and effective service delivery. Training initiatives which lead to the successful completion of action plans and performance measures are incorporated into the Strategic Management Plan. Conversely, training initiatives that have had minimal or no positive impact on improving employee performance and service delivery are revised or discontinued.

5.10 Evaluation of Workforce, Leader Training and Development Systems

The effectiveness of the workforce is evaluated on the basis of whether or not strategic goals and performance measures are met or exceeded. Factors utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency's workforce are referral sources, caseload size, demographic and economic conditions, and the availability of financial resources.

In the service delivery programs, Senior Managers evaluate the ratios among referral rates, total served and workforce capacities. This would include, but not be limited to, the development of proposals to redistribute territories or add additional staff to accommodate the needs of consumers. Similarly, the workforce capacity of consumer and administrative service staff are also evaluated to ensure that any additional or unforeseen service delivery needs can be accommodated.

5.11 Motivation of Workforce

In an effort to boost staff morale and improve attitudes about job performance and the work environment, a Rewards and Recognition Program has been established. Staff are encouraged to recognize and nominate their peers on the basis of such qualities as extra effort, teamwork, positive attitude, and community service. These same criteria are also utilized for nominees for Employee of the Year. Flexible work schedules are also offered to all staff. The use of flex time provides staff the opportunity to balance work and personal commitments.

5.12 Workforce Well-Being, Satisfaction and Motivation

Staff are encouraged to provide verbal and written feedback on job satisfaction, training needs, service delivery and the state of the agency. Workforce well-being, satisfaction and motivation are communicated through staff meetings, performance appraisals and needs assessment surveys.

Senior Managers promptly handle staff grievances in an effort to maintain balance and harmony with regards to the best interest of the employee and the agency. Employee separation data is evaluated by Human Resources and communicated to Senior Managers. Senior Managers use this data to be proactive and ensure that separation reasons pertaining to job dissatisfaction are resolved in order to prevent future occurrences.

Future initiatives to measure job satisfaction include the dissemination of an annual survey to all staff. This will provide staff with the opportunity to provide relevant, anonymous feedback on the Commissioner and Senior Management and make thought provoking and meaningful comments and suggestions on agency improvements. Questions will be specifically designed to address agency operations and service delivery in order to obtain constructive responses that would be beneficial to all staff.

5.13 Career Progression and Succession Planning

Career Progression is accomplished through staff development training. SCCB has developed a comprehensive staff development training program designed to expand and strengthen the knowledge and skill level of service delivery staff statewide. The four objectives outlined in the staff development training program were based on the need to increase staff competency. Additionally, staff are encouraged to provide feedback on additional training needs that are directly related to job performance and personal development.

Senior Managers continually evaluate workforce capacities to ensure effective continuity of service delivery as it relates to the needs of consumers. Quarterly reviews of workforce capabilities and capacity are conducted to ensure that any succession planning previously outlined is updated as needed with regards to current staffing needs. Cross training is used to accommodate workforce changes. The annual review of policy and procedure manuals to ensure consistency of program operations and best practices is also an integral part of the succession planning process.

5.14 Maintaining a Safe, Secure and Healthy Work Environment

Safety training and awareness is managed by the agency's Facilities Maintenance Manager and is conducted by way of routine fire drills, dissemination of information pertaining to emergency evacuation procedures and weekly and monthly inspections of the working environment of staff and the training environment of consumers.

Staff are encouraged to participate in state sponsored wellness activities. Monthly bulletins pertaining to health related activities and events are received from the State Health Plan Prevention Partners Employee Insurance Program. This information is forwarded to all SCCB staff via e-mail from the Office of the Commissioner. To date, SCCB staff have voluntarily participated in the following state sponsored wellness activities: Wellness Walks, Mammogram Screenings, Prostate Screenings and Diabetes Screenings/Awareness.

Category 6: Process Management

6.1 Core Competencies

The means to achieving the agency's Mission Statement determines the core competencies. The core competencies of the agency are vocational rehabilitation services which lead to competitive employment and social and economic independence for blind and visually impaired South Carolinians.

The provision of specialized training identified on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is the primary means by which this is accomplished. The SCCB has three specialized types of training for the blind and visually impaired: adjustment to blindness training, assistive technology training and the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program. These training components provide invaluable services that cannot be replicated in the community.

6.2 Key Work Processes

The key work process that contribute to the achievement of the agency's mission to provide individualized services leading to competitive employment and economic and social independence are eligibility determination, development of Individualized Plans of Employment (IPE) and placement in competitive employment. In every phase of the rehabilitation process, the Counselor is the key person in making the provision of services to the consumers. The consumer is a collaborating partner with the development, implementation and evaluation of the IPE.

The consumer exercises informed choice in the IPE process in terms of the selection of the employment goal, services and service providers. Greater emphasis is placed on the fact that services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is both appropriate to the service being provided and reflects the informed choice of the individual. Training needs are determined by the consumer's vocational objective. The specialized training programs include the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC), Training and Employment Division (T&E) and the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). The EBMRC training curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, GED Preparation, Braille Literacy, Home and Personal Management, Vocational Evaluation, Communications and Woodworking.

Curriculum in the T&E Division includes Braille Terminals, Speech and Magnification Software, Closed Circuit Television, Scanners/Reading Software and Notetakers. The BEP training program provides job training and placement for individuals to become licensed vendors and operate their own vending location.

Reports detailing the consumer's training progress are provided to Counselors on a monthly basis. Once training and all other services identified on the IPE have been provided, the development of potential job opportunities for the consumer begins. Employment Consultants are available to assist Counselors in providing job search and job placement assistance for consumers as needed.

To ensure that each of the above mentioned work processes are consistently utilized, each component has been integrated into each Counselor's performance appraisal. Requirements include the establishment of a benchmark for a minimum number referrals developed, cases determined eligible, IPEs developed, referrals to each training program and competitive employment placements.

6.3 Process Design and Delivery

The Senior Managers and service delivery staff on all levels utilize the Client Information System (CIS) to evaluate and compare data. Senior Managers utilize the CIS data to direct agency operations, including the performance measures that were specifically identified in the Strategic Management Plan. Service delivery staff utilize the CIS as a case management tool. The CIS provides status reports that assist the Counselors and Senior Managers in monitoring the progress of meeting performance measures which include – but are not limited to - referrals received, referrals processed, eligibility determinations, individualized service plans developed, cases successful closed and total served.

6.4 Meeting Key Performance Requirements

Quality Assurance reviews and audits client data in all consumer service programs. Additionally, reconciliation of case file and consumer data is conducted during each case review. Compliance is based on federal and state regulations and agency established policies and procedures. Reports regarding compliance and the successful achievement of performance measures are disseminated to Senior Managers on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Senior Managers evaluate the Quality Assurance reports to determine the effectiveness of the action plans in the achievement of key performance measures and to devise future projections of workforce capacities and financial resource needs.

6.5 Key product and Service Related Work Processes

Key product and service related work processes are evaluated on a quarterly basis by Senior Managers. Data trend comparisons are conducted to assess efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Action plans are developed or modified to improve those processes which did not produce the desired outcomes or in instances wherein consumer needs have significantly changed. Implementation of improvement of key service related work processes would include development and implementation of a proposal, data collection and evaluation of results. Successful initiatives are incorporated into the Strategic Management Plan and all applicable employee performance appraisals. Financial resources are allocated as needed to implement and support the new process.

Employers are a key supplier of employment opportunities for the agency's consumers. Counselors and Employment Consultants maintain direct contact with potential employers on a continuous basis. The agency partners with employers by conducting job site analysis and work site modifications to accommodate blind and visually impaired employees.

The agency also continues to serve as a technical resource for employers when issues arise concerning blind or visually impaired staff that could jeopardize employment. These services not only provide employment opportunities for the agency's consumers but assists employers with meeting the Americans with Disability Act requirements.

In addition to working with employers, Counselors are also responsible for maintaining contact with physicians in their respective territories. A significant portion of the referrals to the agency is received from doctors. Maintaining an open line of communication with doctors ensures that the rate of referrals from these key stakeholders remain constant.

6.6 Key Support Processes

The Information Technology, Finance and Human Resources Departments provide administrative support to all staff. Each of these key support processes function under its own strategic planning objectives. These support components are improved and updated in response to internal and external feedback, technological upgrades, performance appraisals and staff development training.

The Information Technology Department is responsible for administering and maintaining the Client Information System (CIS). Senior Management as well as all consumer service staff can access the reports generated from the CIS as needed. Training on the use and importance of accurate data entry into the CIS has been provided to all consumer service staff.

The Finance Department provides monthly reports of the financial status of all departments. Under the direct supervision of Senior Managers, consumer service staff are responsible for managing their budget and purchasing goods and services in the most cost effective manner. Accurate and consistent tracking of budget allocations has been included on the performance appraisals for all service delivery staff.

Human Resources works with the Chief of Consumer Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on meeting the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirement of obtaining a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Additionally, the recruitment process for personnel vacancies are handled as expeditiously as possible so as to ensure that there is a minimal delay in service delivery.

6.7 Determination of Resources Needed to Meet Financial Obligations

The SCCB's primary source of funding is federal funds through a Basic Support Grant. Although distribution of funds is contingent upon compliance with federal regulations and federal reporting requirements, the amount of funding has remained consistent from year to year.

State funds are allocated from the General Assembly and the Governor. Budget requests for state funds are made on an annual basis. The amount of the budget request is contingent upon consumer and staffing needs to maintain quality service delivery and to achieve the agency's mission. Budget reductions in state allocations for FY 09 had a tremendous impact on service delivery in all state funded programs. As a result, Senior Management and counselors in state funded programs expended every effort to find alternate sources of funding to maintain service delivery.

7.1 Key Measures of Mission Accomplishment and Service Performance

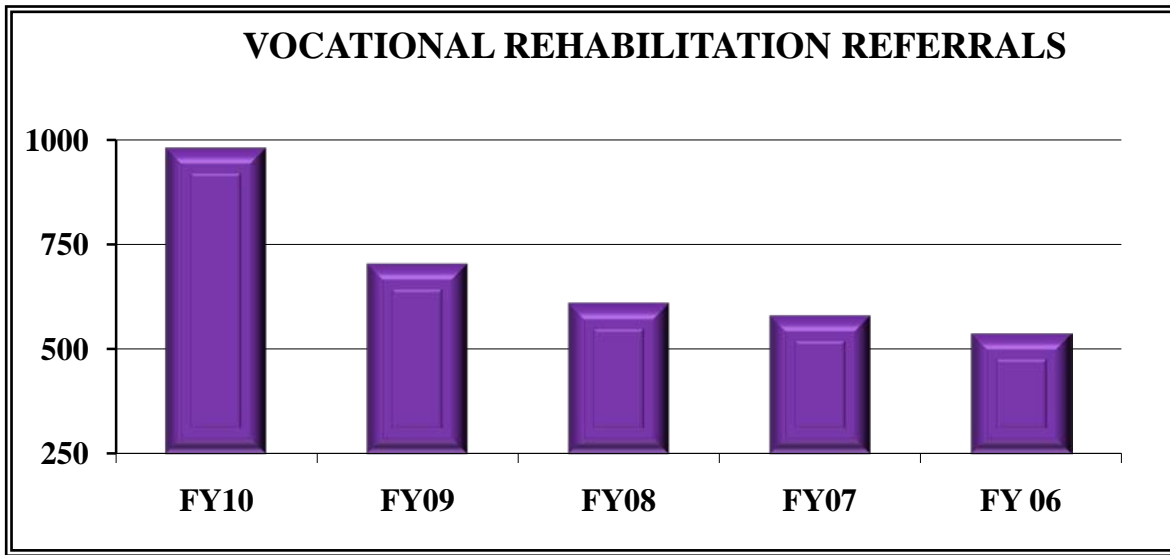


Figure 7.1-1

Since FY 2006, referrals to the VR Program have steadily increased by at least 8% annually. The steady increase is attributed to a continual expansion of service delivery to previously unserved and underserved counties.

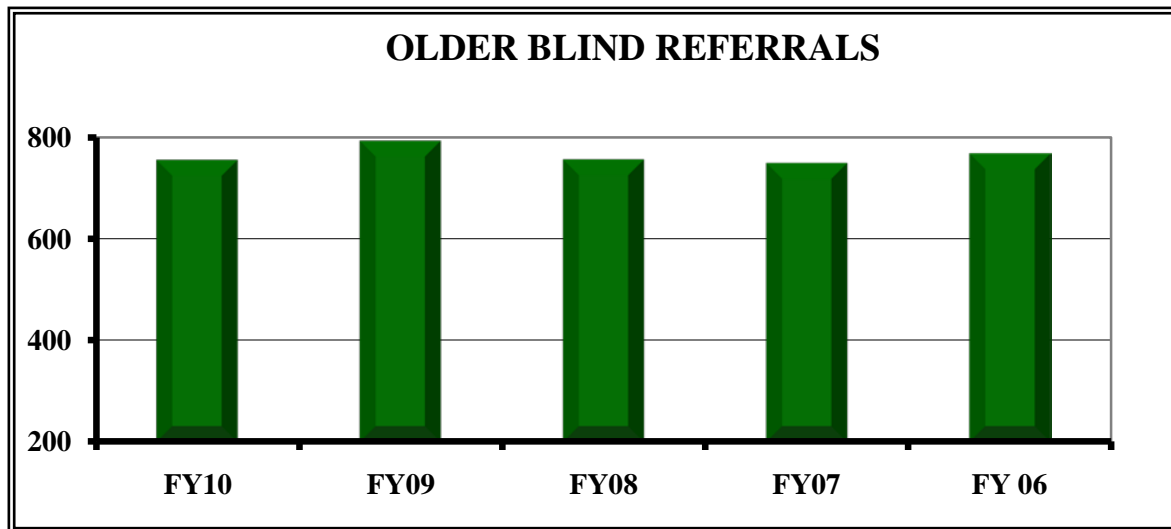


Figure 7.1-2

In FY 2010, there was a 5% decrease in the number of referrals to the Older Blind Program compared to FY 2009. The decrease was due to a reduction in the number of referrals that are typically generated from community presentations by the Older Blind staff.

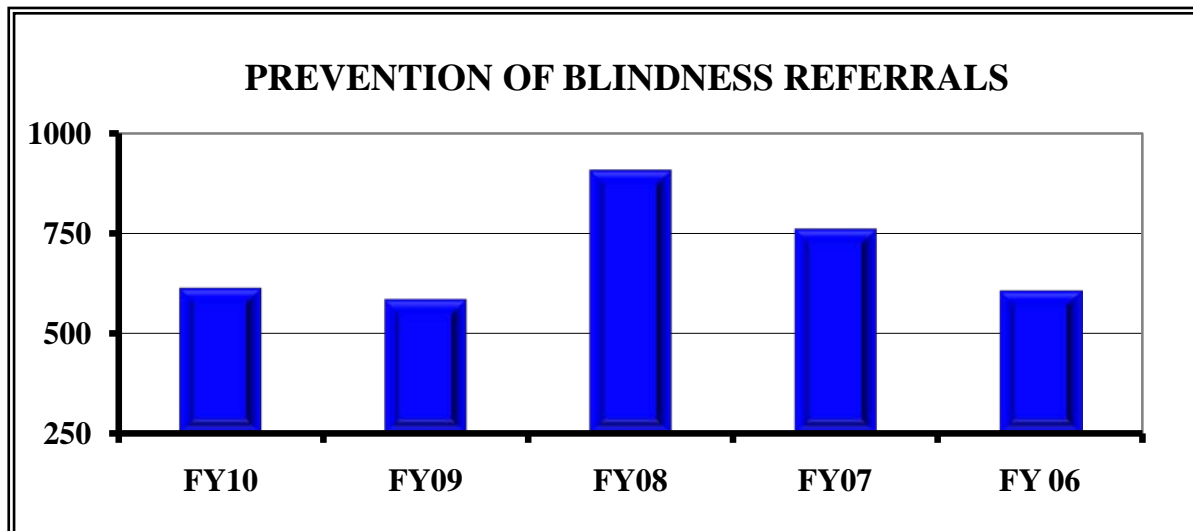


Figure 7.1-3

There was an increase of approximately 5 percent in referrals to the Prevention of Blindness Program in FY 2010. Despite the awareness of budgetary constraints in funding, eye care professionals continued to refer individuals who did not have health insurance but were in need of assistance with the purchase of medical services.

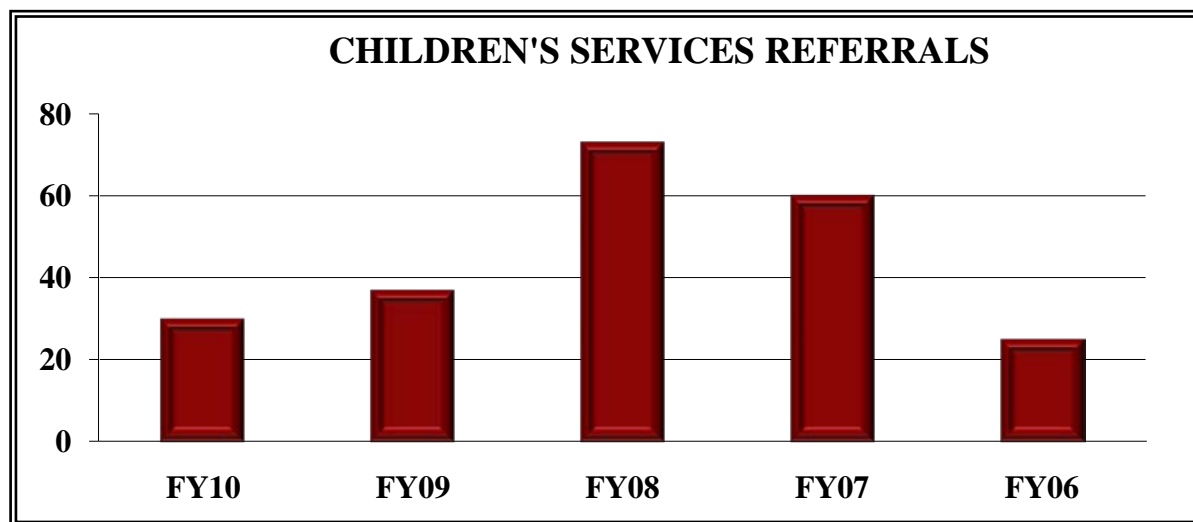


Figure 7.1-4

The Children’s Services Program is 100% state funded. As a result of significant budget reductions in state funding and limitations in workforce capacity, there was a 23% decrease in the number of referrals received compared to FY 2009.

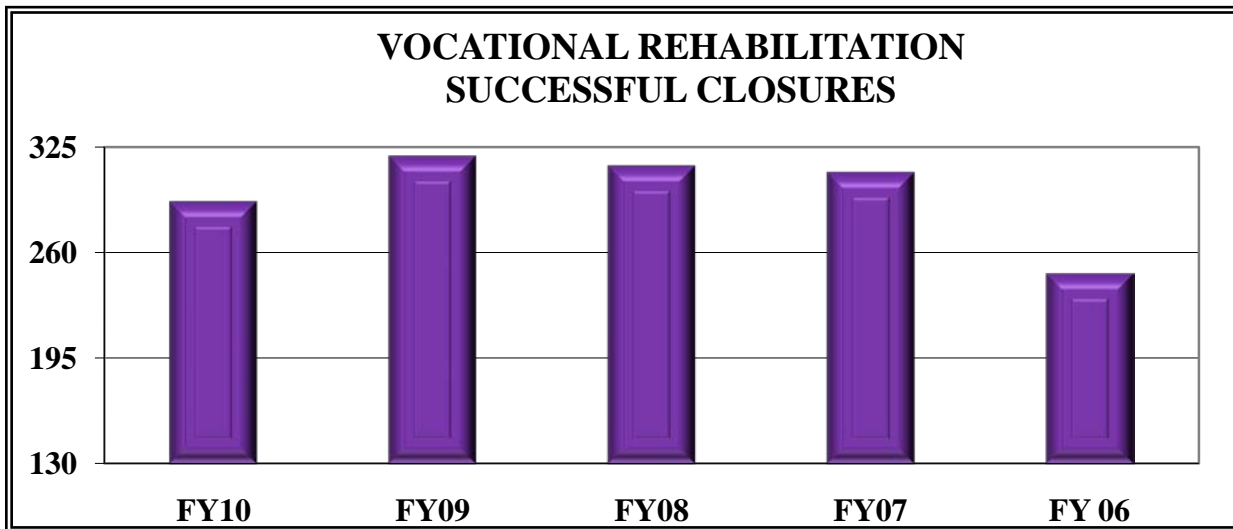


Figure 7.1-5

In FY 2010, successful closures decreased by approximately 10% compared to FY 09. The decrease was attributed to a decrease in workforce capacity and South Carolina's unemployment rate.

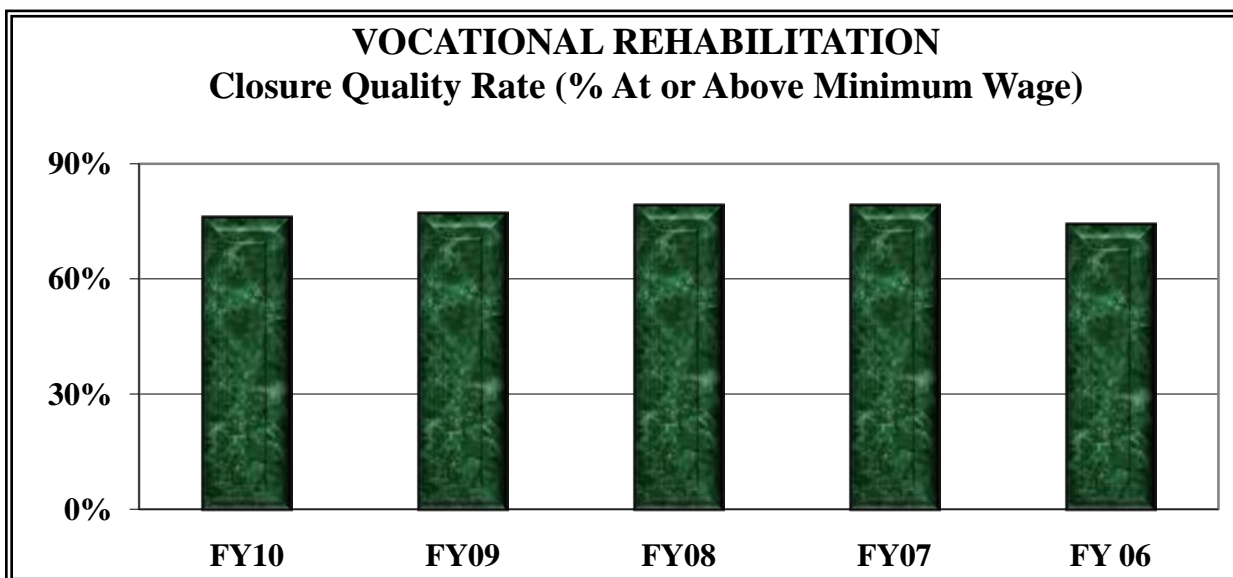


Figure 7.1-6

In FY 10, the closure quality rate decreased by 1% compared to FY 09. The decrease in closure quality was attributed to the decrease in the total number of successful closures compared to FY 09.

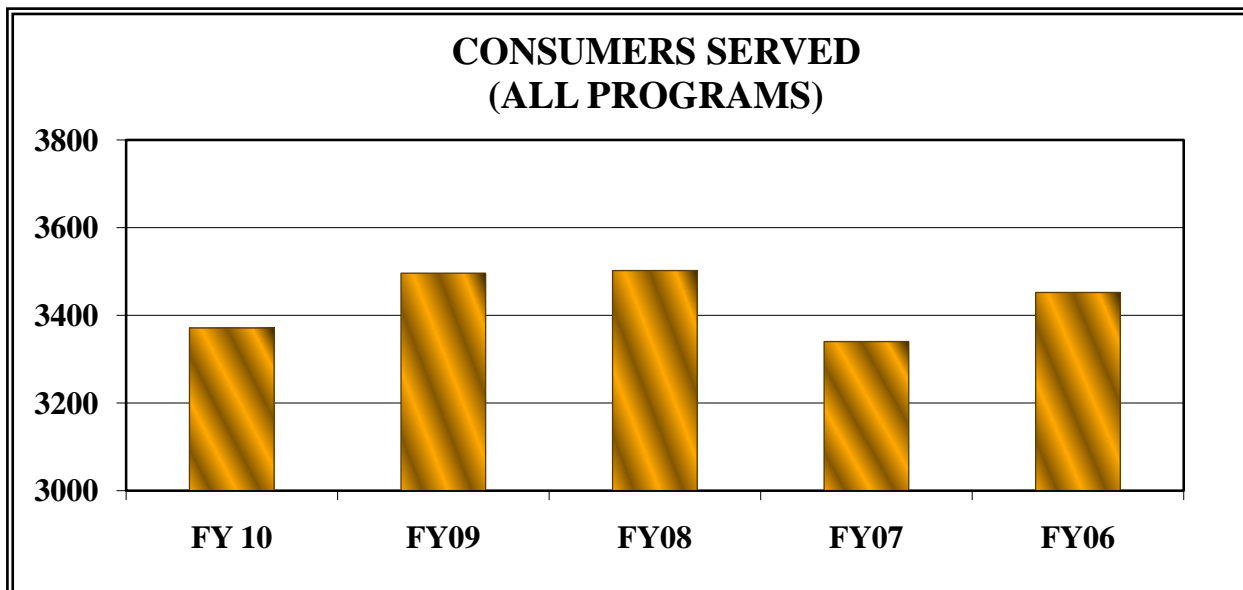


Figure 7.1-7

The SCCB Consumer Service Programs are as follows: Vocational Rehabilitation, Older Blind, Prevention of Blindness, Independent Living and Children's Services. In FY 2010, there was a 3% decrease in the total number of consumers served compared to FY 2009. The decrease was attributed to a decline in the total number of consumers referred to the agency.

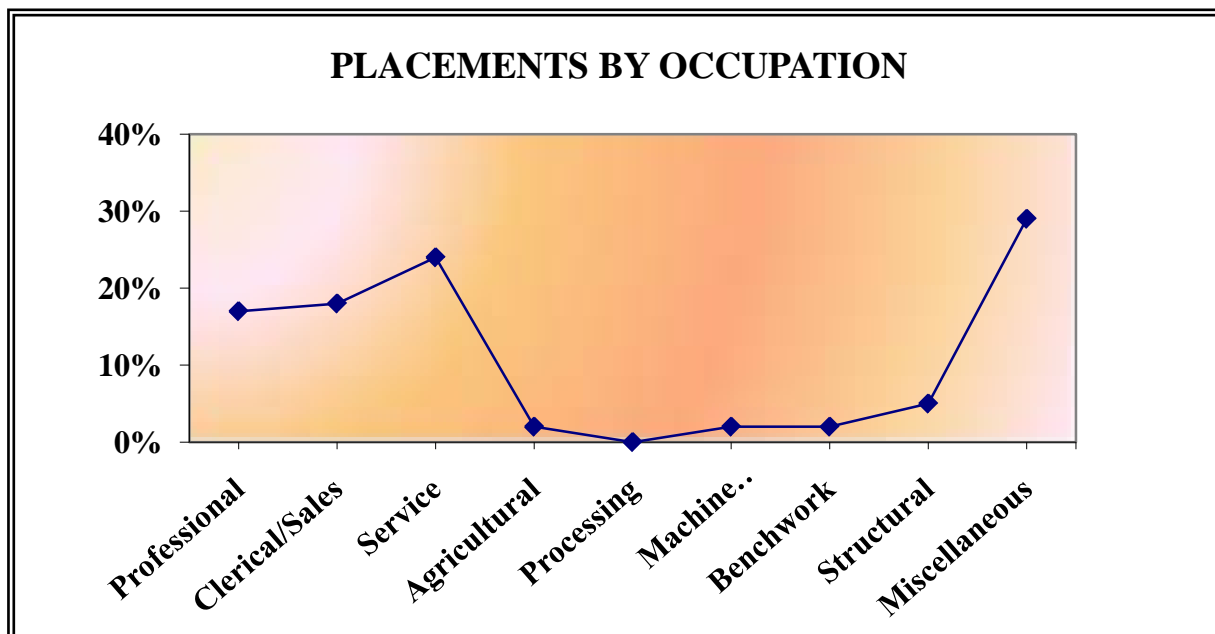


Figure 7.1-8

In FY 2010, the majority of the competitive employment placements were in the Clerical, Sales and Professional Service industries. The employment trends in each of these service industries have been consistent since FY 2004.

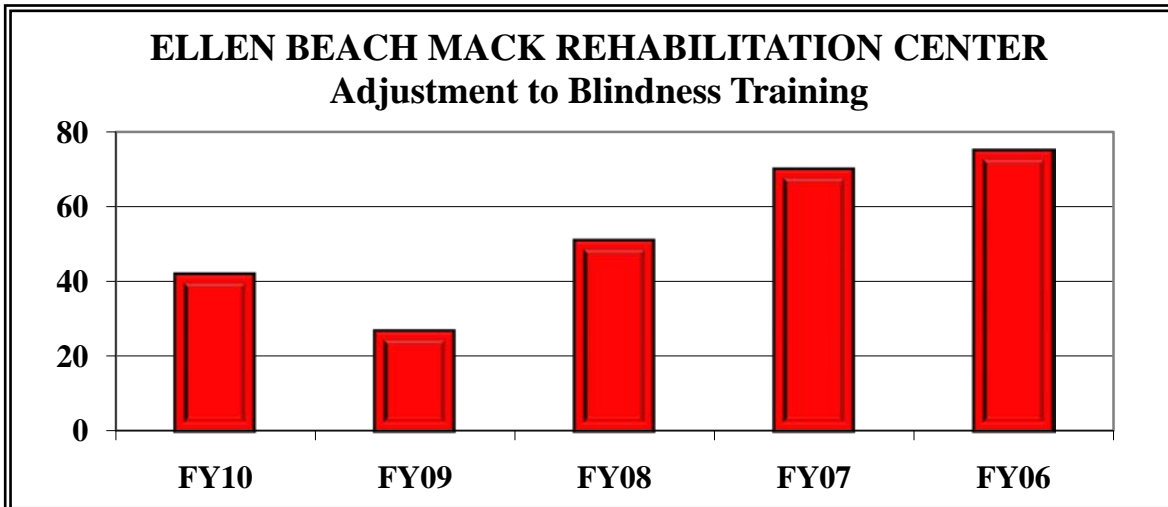


Figure 7.1-9

In FY 2010, the training completion rate at the EBMRC increased by approximately 55% compared to FY 09. The increase in the number of consumers who completed adjustment to blindness training was attributed to a 64% increase in the number of referrals for training, which resulted in a substantial increase in the availability of consumers.

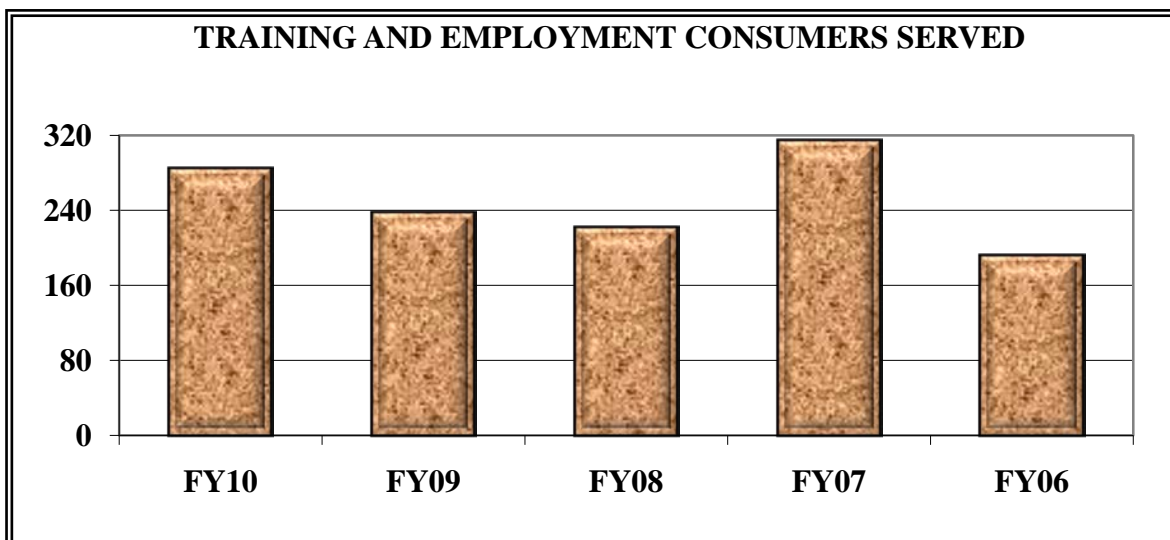


Figure 7.1-10

In FY 10, the total served in Training and Employment increased by approximately 19% compared to FY 09. The increase was attributed to an expansion of assistive technology outreach services, internship opportunities and job readiness training initiatives.

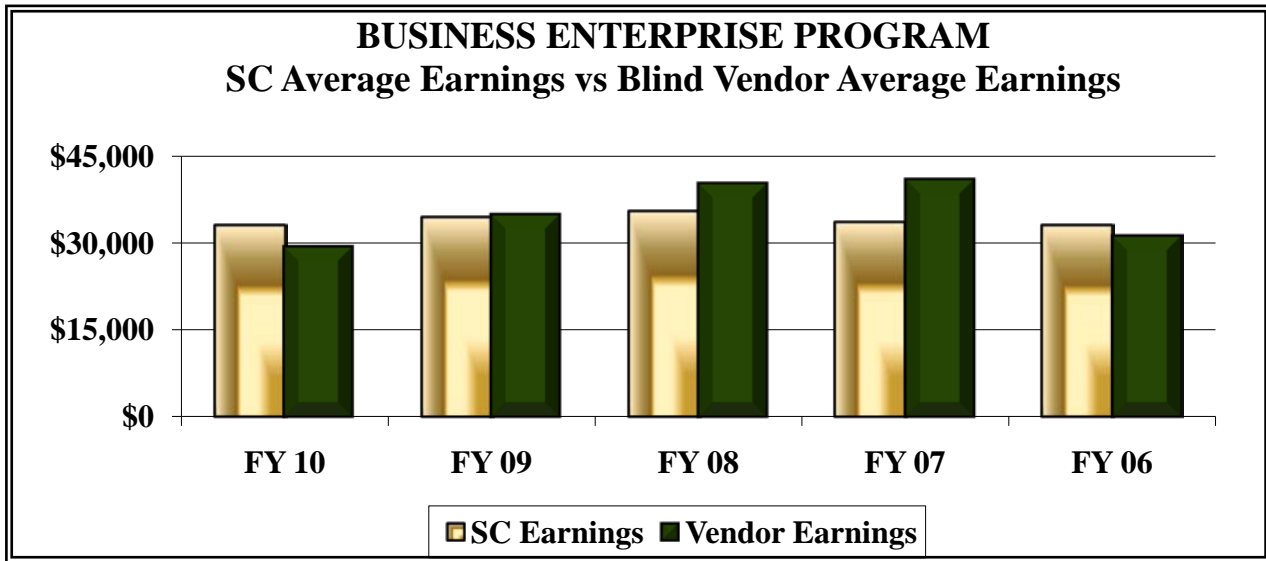


Figure 7.1-11

In FY 2010, Blind Vendor earnings were approximately 10% less than South Carolina average earnings. The income difference was due to the frail state of the economy, which resulted in a decrease in vending sales.

7.2 Customer Satisfaction

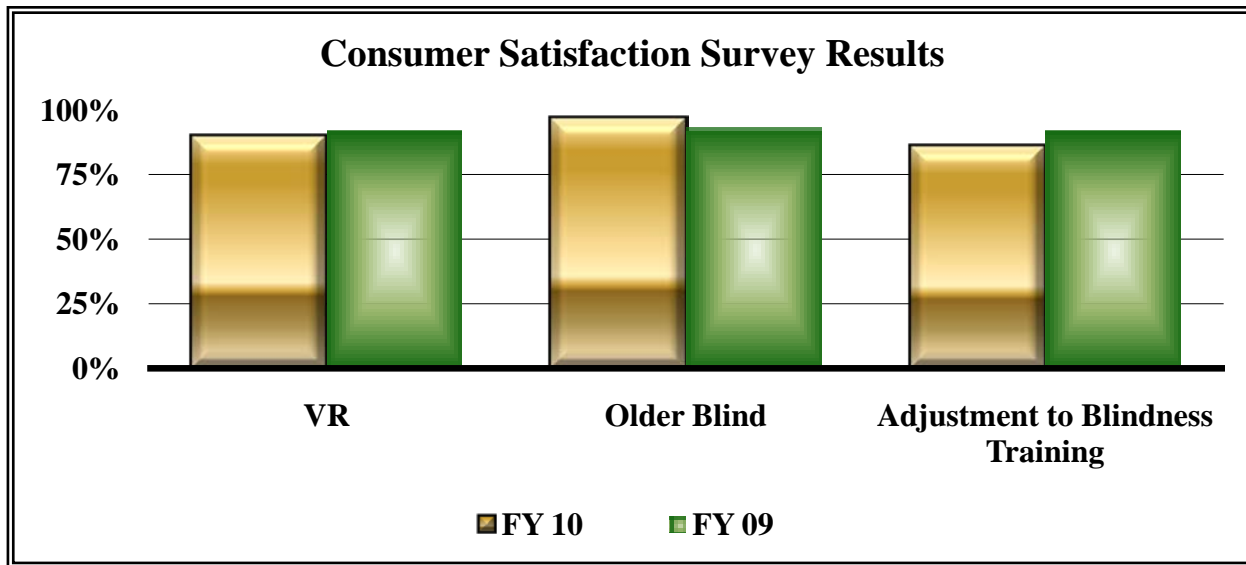


Figure 7.2-1

In FY 2010, the consumer satisfaction survey results for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Older Blind Program and the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Training Center averaged 91%. Efforts to improve the rate of consumer satisfaction in all programs will include, but not be limited to, an emphasis on strengthening communication between service delivery staff and consumers, strengthening consumer informed choice and implementing the consumers' recommendations for improvement.

7.3. Key Measures on Financial Performance

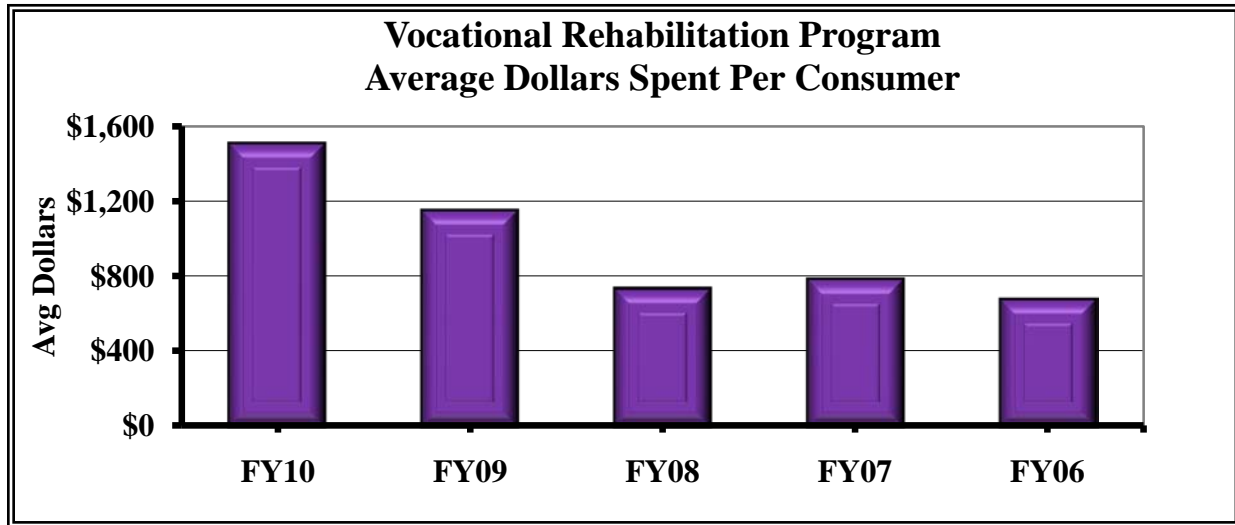


Figure 7.3-1

In FY 2010, the average dollar spent per consumer significantly increased by 31% compared to FY 2009. The increase in the average dollars spent was attributed to an increase in consumer need for the expansion of outreach services, assistive technology software and equipment and an increase in tuition assistance for those consumers for whom college sponsorship was being provided.

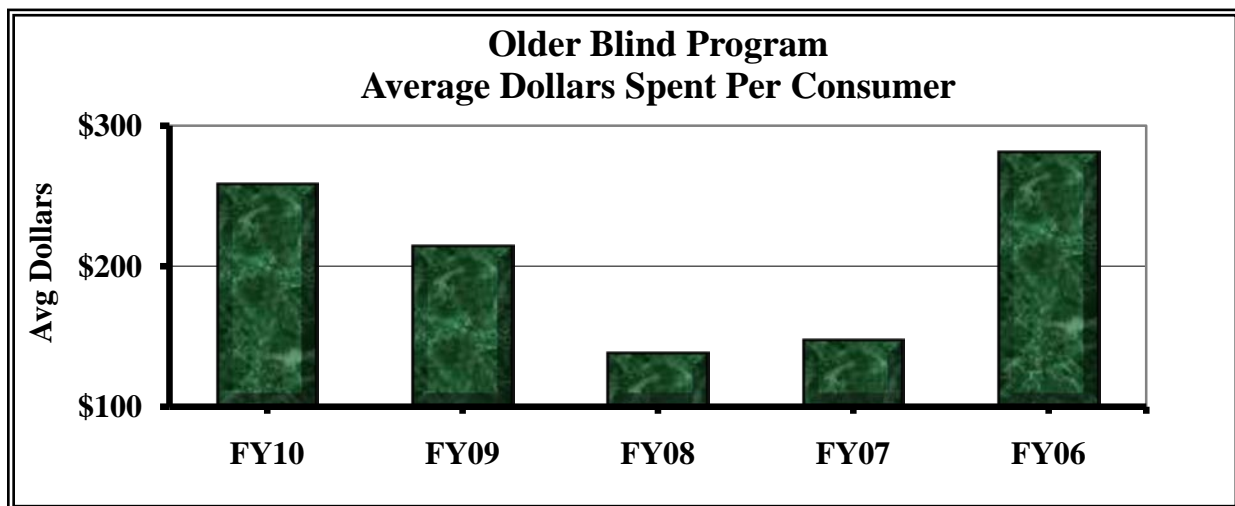


Figure 7.3-2

In FY 10, there was an increase of approximately 20% in the average dollars spent per consumer in the Older Blind Program compared to FY 2009. This increase was attributed to the expansion of services to the elderly to include assistive technology software and equipment and the associated costs to provide such services.

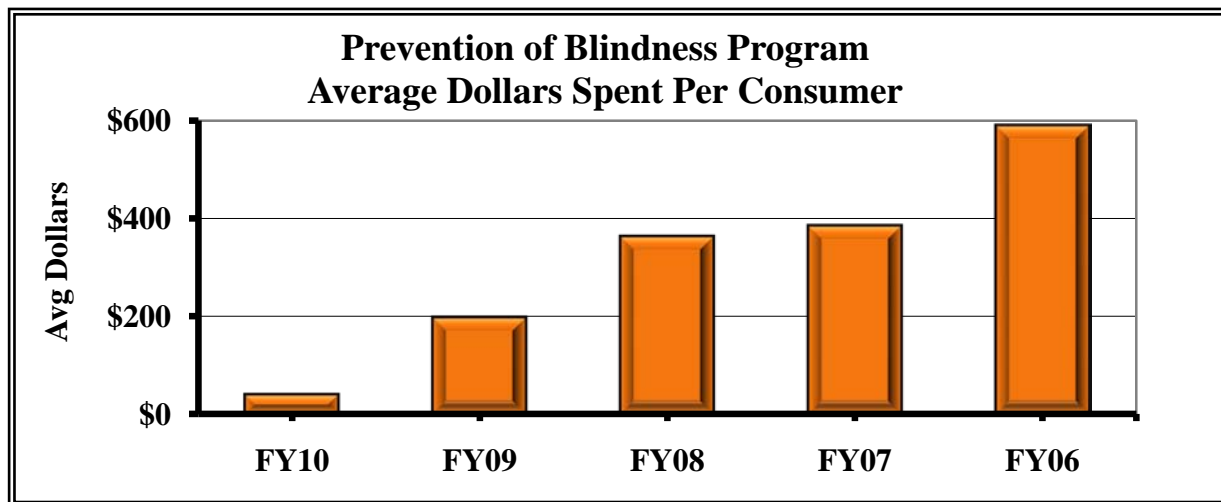


Figure 7.3 3

Due to drastic reductions in state funding since FY 2008, there continues to be a drastic decline in the average amount spent per consumer in the Prevention of Blindness Program. The substantial reduction in funding restricts the type and amount of medical services that can be provided on behalf of consumers.

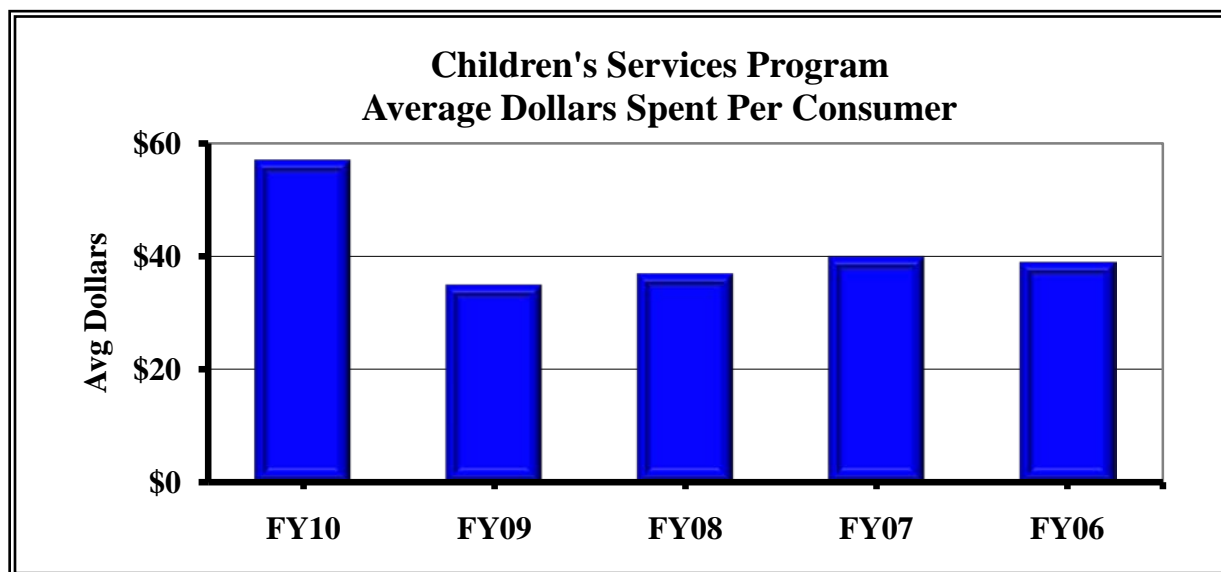


Figure 7.3 4

Despite drastic reductions in state funding, there was an increase of approximately 62% in the average dollars spent per consumer in the Children's Services Program in FY 2010 compared to FY 2009. An increase in the number of purchases for children who were currently being served (i.e. assistive technology and low vision devices) attributed to the increase in expenditures.

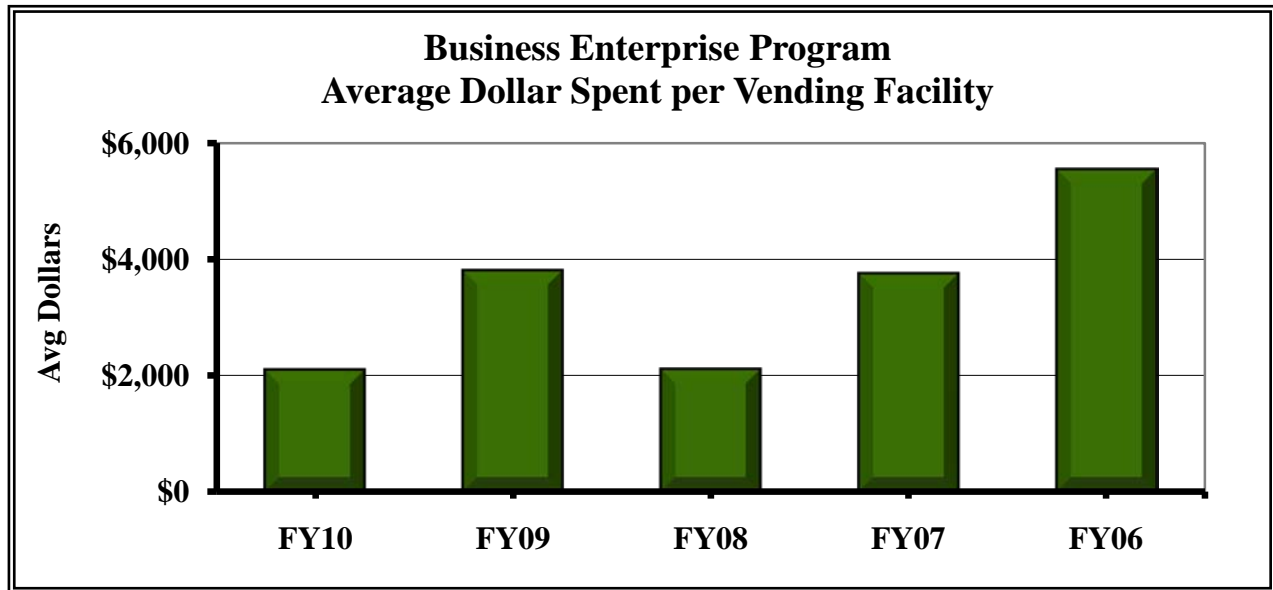


Figure 7.3 5

In FY 2010, the average dollars spent per facility in BEP decreased by approximately 80% compared to FY 2009. The reduction in expenditures was a direct result of fewer vending facilities opened and fewer vending locations in need of renovations.

7.4 Workforce Engagement

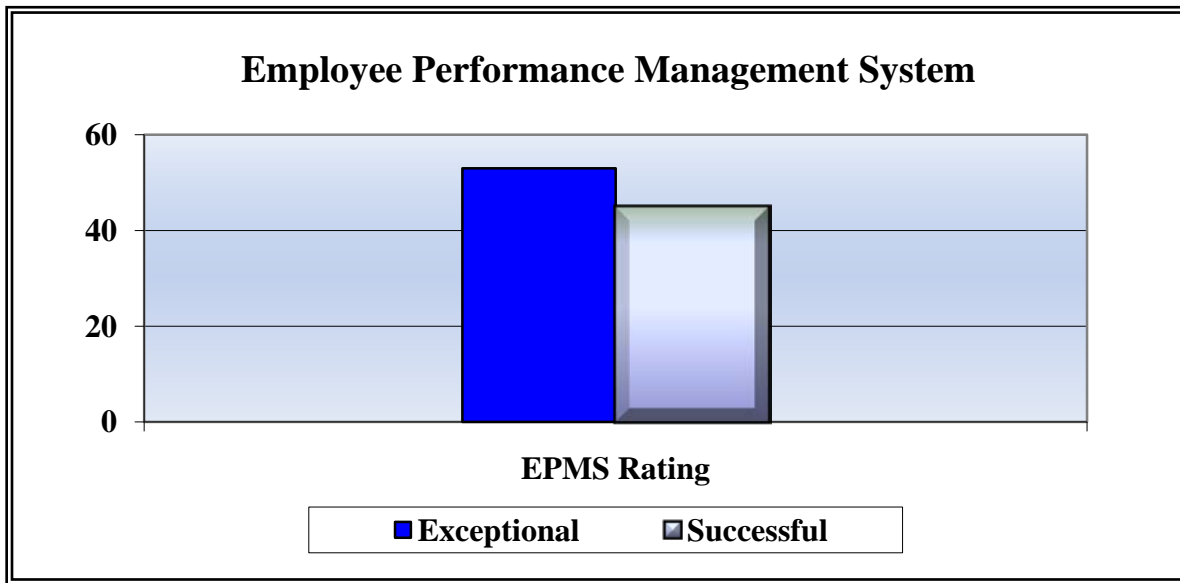


Figure 7.4-1

In FY 09, the number of staff who received an Exceptional rating was 17% higher than the number of staff who received a Successful rating. The higher Exceptional ratings indicate that expectations regarding job functions have been clearly communicated and that staff are committed to maintaining the quality of their job performances.

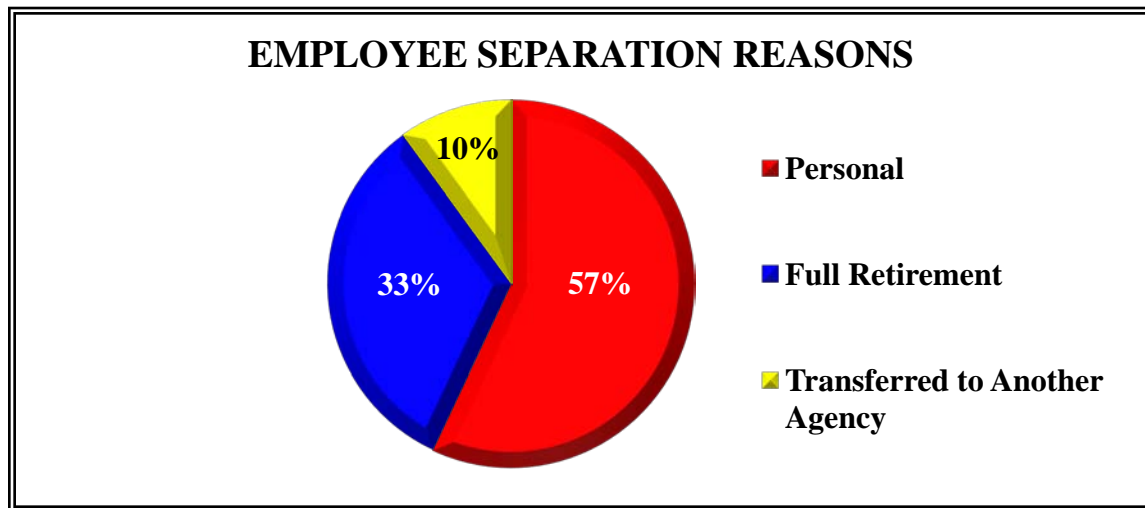


Figure 7.4-2

Personal reasons, retirement and transfer to another agency were the most common reasons for employee separation from SCCB in FY 2010. However, due to the use of federal stimulus funds, the overall workforce capacity did not decrease compared to FY 2009.



Figure 7.4-3

In FY 2010, training opportunities decreased by approximately 12% compared to FY 2009. However, as a result of the needs that were identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, staff development training surveys and performance appraisal feedback, it is anticipated that training opportunities will increase to accommodate the identified needs in FY 2011.

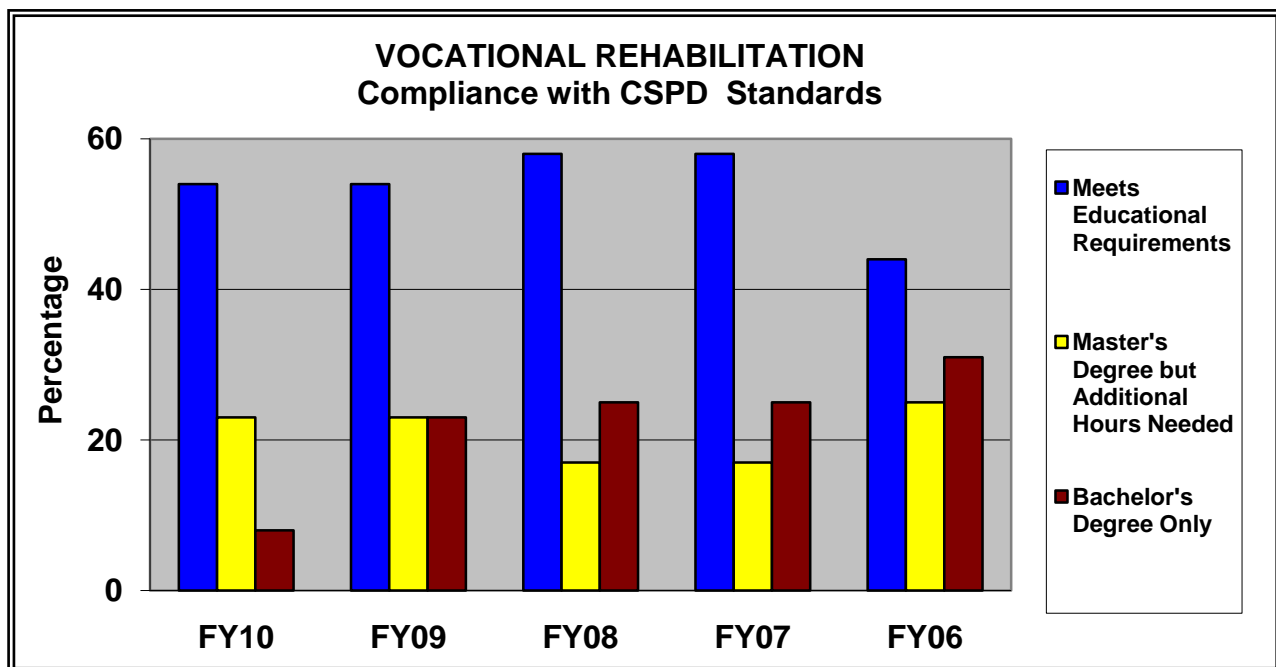


Figure 7.4-4

SCCB continued to make progress in achieving compliance with the educational requirements of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). In FY 2010, VR Counselors who did not have a Master's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling were proactively working towards the completion of graduate course work to obtain the necessary educational requirements.

7.5 Organizational Effectiveness/Operational Efficiency/Work System Performance

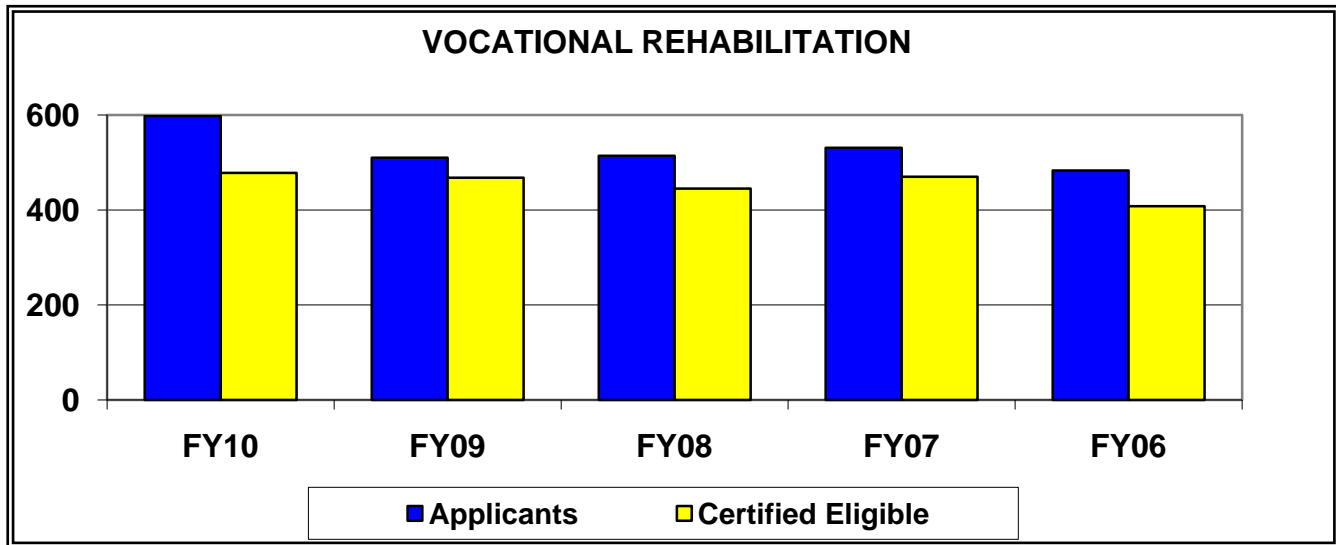


Figure 7.5-1

There was a 39% increase in the number of referrals received as well as a 17% increase in the number of applicants compared to FY 2009. A reduction in workforce capacity in the VR Program resulted in an inability to accommodate the increase in the number of referrals and applicants. As a result, 17% fewer consumers were certified eligible for services. Increasing the certification of eligibility rate will be accomplished with the addition new VR Counselors in FY 2010.

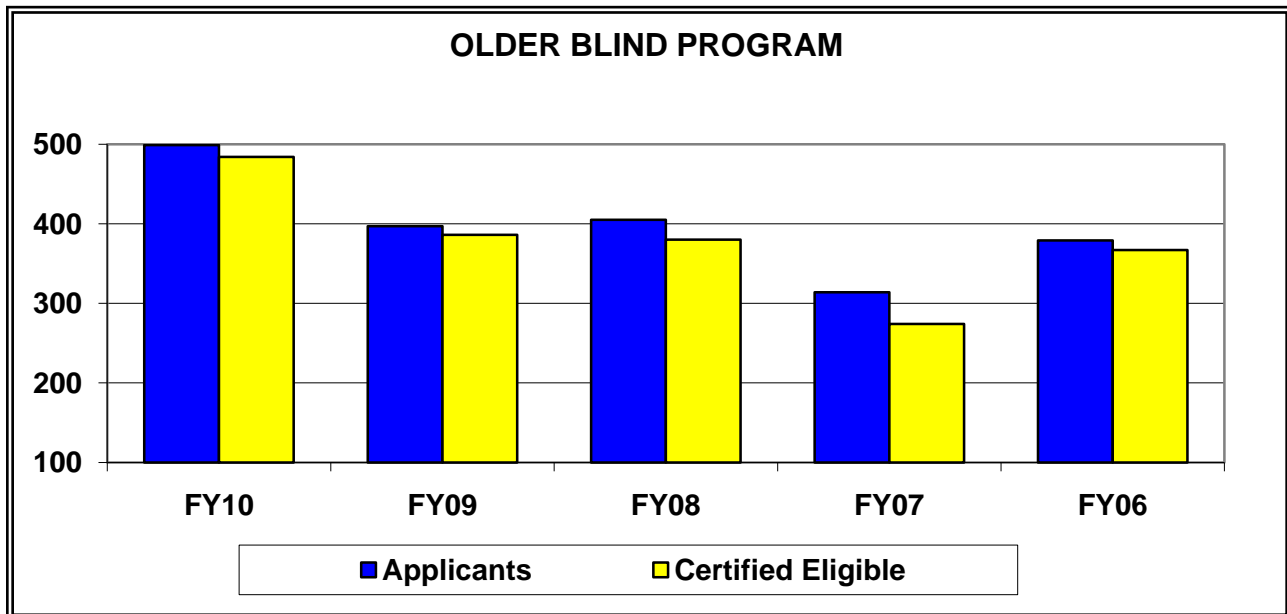


Figure 7.5-2

There was a 25% increase in the number of applicants and eligibility determinations compared to FY 2009. The Older Blind Program has maintained a 97% eligibility determination rate for services.

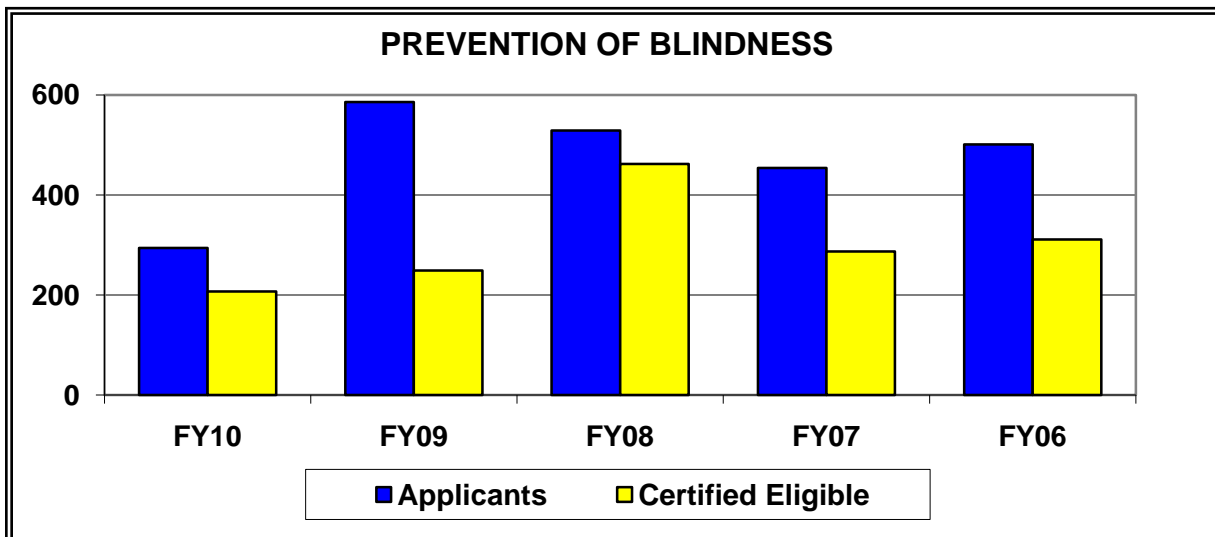


Figure 7.5-3

As a direct result of substantial budget reductions in state funds, the number of applicants and eligibility determinations in the Prevention of Blindness Program were drastically reduced compared to FY 2009. Fewer referrals were made to the Prevention program, which resulted in fewer applicants, which resulted in fewer individuals determined eligible.

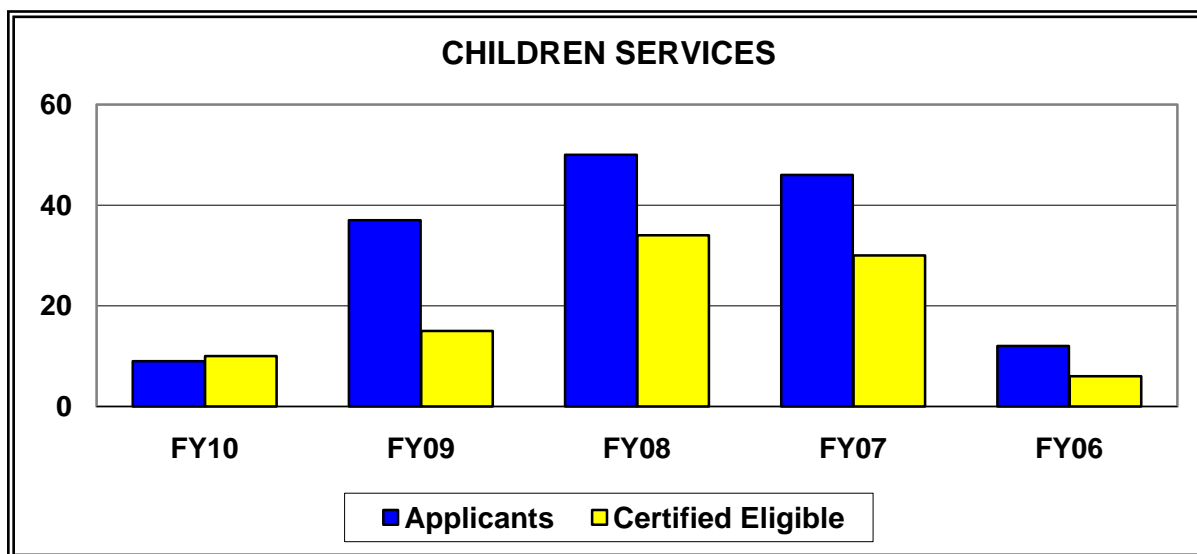


Figure 7.5-4

The number of applicants and eligibility determinations in the Children's Services Program decreased by at least 50% compared to FY 2009. Fewer referrals were made to the program, which resulted in fewer applicants, which resulted in fewer individuals determined eligible. Additionally, there were only 2 Children's Services Counselors who were serving the entire state, resulting in a disproportion in the consumer to counselor ratio.

7.6 Key Measures of Regulatory/Legal Compliance

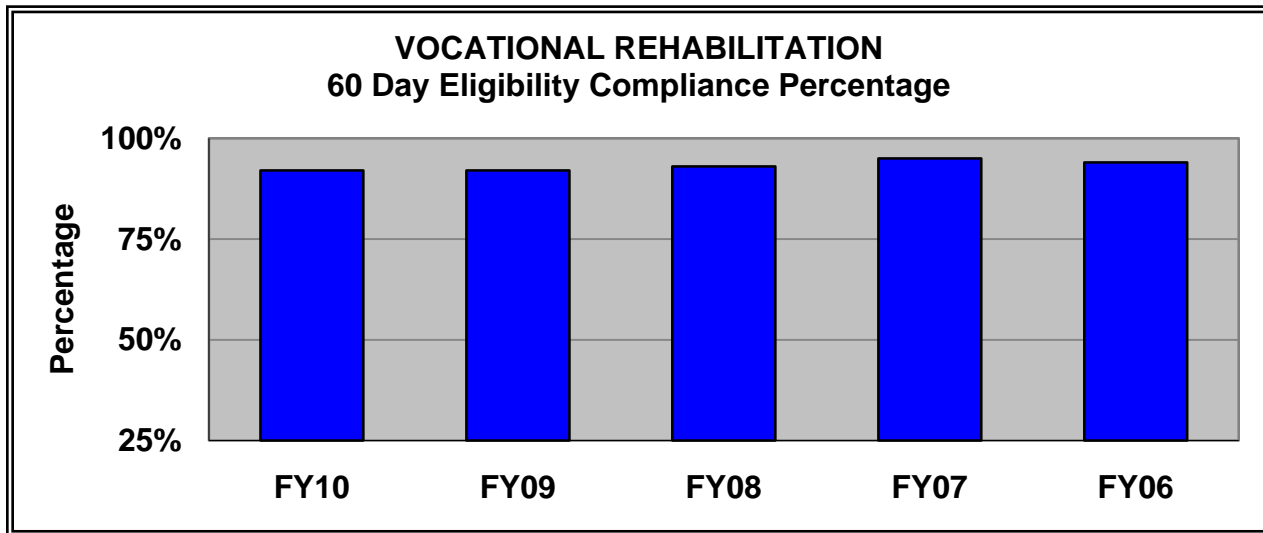


Figure 7.6-1

In FY 2010, there was no change in the eligibility compliance percentage compared to FY 2009. Although eligibility was not determined within 60 days for all cases, there was documentation when applicable that the consumer was in agreement to an extension of time to determine eligibility.

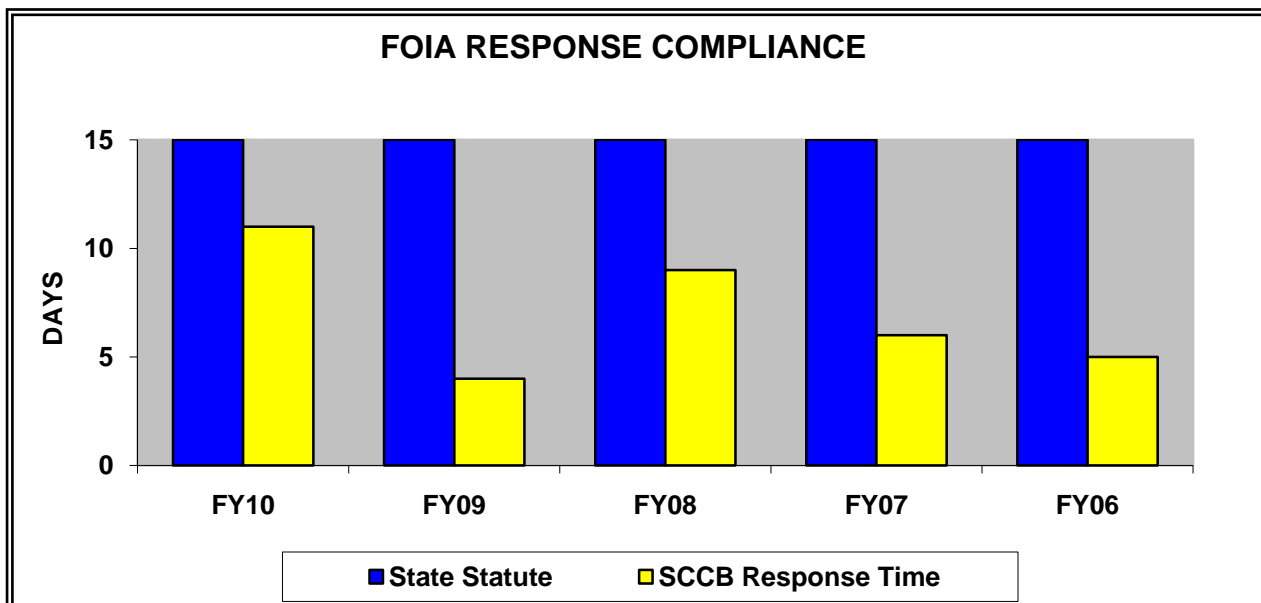


Figure 7.6-2

State statute requires that all FOIA request are responded to within 15 working days. Since FY 2004, at SCCB has consistently maintained a response time well below the required state statute response time by at least 40%.